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THREAT TO NON-FLAM. While the ordinary public performance of films printed on standard inflammable stock is strictly controlled by regulations framed to secure public safety but also used to enforce an undefined but far reaching measure of censorship, the exhibition of non-inflammable film, as used with all sub-standard projectors, has so far remained free from official interference. There are indications, however, that this freedom may be short-lived. The Home Office is said to be considering the introduction of new regulations which would bring non-flam film virtually under the same restrictions as apply to standard stock.

Such a move would have a disastrous effect on the development of the use of the film in education, social welfare, the public services, and in every sphere where it can serve the interests of the community. The value of the film as a means of education and instruction is being increasingly recognized, and numerous schools and educational organizations throughout the country have already installed apparatus which may now become unusable.

The proposed regulations, it is understood, are intended to lessen the physical danger to public safety, apart from the risk of fire, which it is feared may be present at uncontrolled exhibitions. It would be difficult, however, to trace any case of accident or disturbance causing injury to any member of the public as a result of using safety film. It would appear, therefore, that if the regulations are to be as stringent as has been hinted, the intention is either censorial or is to satisfy interests opposed to the spread of non-theatrical exhibitions and the increase of advertising shows organized by large commercial firms.

To endanger the unrestricted development of the sub-standard film, particularly in the field of education, in order to eliminate a particular type of performance unwelcome to certain other vested interests, would be an act of supreme folly. Until the official text of the proposed regulations is made public there is little that can be done to organize opposition, but every one concerned with the use of safety film should be primed in readiness to take joint action in appealing against the introduction of any measures which would place unnecessary restrictions on the exhibition of films used for

educational and cultural ends. All film societies, educational organizations and other bodies interested in the development of the film should immediately consider the possibility of co-operating in a nation-wide campaign to safeguard their interests and to oppose any encroachment on the existing liberties of the community.

SENSE AND CENSORSHIP. Bernard Shaw in his preface to "The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet" said possibly everything that need be said against the bourgeois principles of censorship; but since then there has grown up a complex system of film censorship arising out of a network of regulations created for entirely different purposes, and it is as well that the tyrannical implications of this system should be kept constantly before the public. Ivor Montagu has already dealt with the political aspect of the question in a pamphlet which showed how the Government, by working through an "unofficial" board of censors appointed by the film trade, could use its control without the burden of responsibility. In "The Censor, the Drama and the Film" (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.) Dorothy Knowles now examines the entire field. Her closely documented marshalling of facts is an effective exposure of the inefficiency of a system which winks at crude pornography and unhesitatingly mutilates works of artistic integrity and serious intention.

While we may agree that some form of control is necessary to prevent the outbreak of public disorder and to guard children against undesirable influences, it is against all radical principles of liberty that every film and every audience should be subject to restrictions intended to control mass re-action in the conglomerated interests of state, society, and religion.

Unfortunately the attitude of certain film producers, whose pictures are little better than animated versions of a particular kind of Continental post card, makes it difficult for any revision in censorship regulations to be considered. It is these muck-merchants, who fortunately are not the entire film trade, who have brought into existence the legions of decency and the countless busybodies whose unintelligent interference the rest of cinema could well do without. Even the news-reels, which have always remained free from supervision, have in recent months so violated every standard of decency in their exploitation of sensationalism that they will have only themselves to blame if they are brought under official control. Paul Rotha's indictment of their policy, contained elsewhere in this issue, should be read as a solemn warning.

The enlightened age in which we can expect complete freedom from censorial interference is still far off, but it is the task of the film societies to see that, as specialized audiences of intelligent people, they secure the right to show films free from the niggling restrictions intended for morons.

THE FILM INSTITUTE. The first annual report of the British Film Institute, which has now a membership of nearly two hundred, shows that a considerable amount of work has been undertaken during the year in setting up machinery which, if properly handled, could be used to tackle some of the more important problems which call for attention. Among the "advisory panels" which have been formed is one on sub-standard films, and as it is largely composed of members of the B.K.S. and apparatus manufacturers its policy with regard to the proposed new non-flam regulations will be awaited with interest. There is also a panel on documentary films, but so far not one on news-reels. In view of recent tendencies it would be exciting to see what would happen if such a panel were formed.

SINCLAIR-EISENSTEIN AGAIN. Upton Sinclair and Sol Lesser are about to release a second film, called *Day of Death*, "rescued" from Eisenstein's Mexican mileage, and Seymour Stern and his storm-troops are already at their heels. The days of protesting and "debunking," writes Stern, are now over, and the future of the campaign lies in an effort to negotiate with Sinclair for a return of the negative to Eisenstein. If this is ever achieved Stern will have earned our admiration for bringing to a happy conclusion one of the most sordid chapters in the history of art.

DEATH OF JEAN VIGO. Cinema is not sufficiently rich in genius that it can afford to lose in early youth one of its most promising directors and serious experimenters. Jean Vigo, whose *Atalante* and *Zero de Conduite* were exciting essays in imaginative realism, after a serious illness in Paris not helped by his burning enthusiasm for cinema, has passed away, leaving the ranks of the independents—in whose hands he believed lay the entire artistic future of the film—poorer by one of their most original and brilliant artists. A melancholy interest will be attached to the exhibition of *Zero de Conduite*, which is to be shown by the Film Society during the coming season.

NORMAN WILSON.

VOLUME THREE

THE THIRD Volume of *Cinema Quarterly* commences with the present number. Copies are obtainable through any bookshop, but if any difficulty is experienced an annual subscription (Great Britain, 4s. 6d.; Abroad, 7s. 6d.) should be sent to the Manager, *Cinema Quarterly*, 24 N.W. Thistle Street Lane. Edinburgh, 2. Binding cases for Volume Two are now ready, price 3s. 6d. each, postage 6d extra. No further expense is necesary as these are self-adjusting. Cases for Volume Three, in which each copy may be placed as issued, are also ready.

BASE NEWS-REEL SENSATIONALISM

IT SEEMS likely that important issues with regard to the function and scope of the news-reel may at last be brought to a head by the widely-shown item of the assassination of King Alexander of Jugo-Slavia. On several recent occasions it has been evident that the news-reel companies' rival efforts for sensationalism would sooner or later provoke public indignation. The 'Outrage at Marseilles' provides that required incentive.

In at any rate one version of the incident, the picture has been edited in such a way as to heighten the effect of the occurrence; by cutting to build suspense and by inserting details (a battered straw hat; a hand with a gun slinking through the crowd) which may or may not be authentic. It is surely the news-reel's task to present as accurate as possible a record of an event. As soon as it begins to dramatize, to construct an incident creatively by cutting for increased effect, news-reel encroaches into the documentary field. Once news-reel adopts documentary approach, almost any event can be given implications to suit any point of view. In this age of social and political unrest, such manipulation holds many dangers.

The inclusion of the Assassination item in ordinary programmes, along with Colour Symphonies and amusement films, is causing wide comment. As pointed out elsewhere in this issue, it defeats the entertainment purpose of cinema, for no studio-made story can stand up to this vivid moment of real life. It suggests that there is scope for extension of news-theatres and that news-reels, except those of the most uncontroversial topics, should be removed from the general theatres. Not for one moment is it implied that records of such events should be suppressed. It is important that they should be exhibited to permit the public to draw its own conclusions. But it is equally important that they should be available only to those who desire to see them and not inserted in the ordinary programmes.

Such exploitation policy is not new. Recently we have seen human suffering literally forced before cameras and microphone, with the participants actually demonstrating their unwillingness to make public their private emotions. There can be no other purpose behind this than exploitation for profit. I do not blame the news-reel cameramen. They have courage and skill and are only obeying instructions. I accuse the policy behind some news-reels and deplore their lack of social responsibility. I condemn the minds that adopt the attitude that there are incidents—be it pit-disaster, shipwreck or strike riots—which can be exploited for gain by laying special emphasis on the brutality or pathos of the occasion. It is a wholly despicable approach to reality.

PAUL ROTHA.

EVASIVE DOCUMENTARY

DAVID SCHRIRE

It is a queer commentary on socially conscious film critics on whom we have come to rely for judgments unaffected by economic compulsives, that they have scrupulously refrained from turning the full force of their condemnation on a new tendency in cinema. In reality, this tendency is not new but its growing popularity and pseudo freshness give it the character of novelty and experimentation. Idyllic or evasive documentary of which Flaherty is the arch priest, is beginning to carve out for itself a well-nigh unassailable place in cinema.

Except for Grierson's far too kindly articles in *Cinema Quarterly* and various *obiter dicta* on the subject of documentary, little criticism has been directed against this new menace. A whole-hearted full-blooded frontal attack, showing its dangers, enlarging on the consequences of such so called "escapism" and revealing —didactically if necessary—the correct orientation for documentary pictures is urgently needed. That it has not already been done is an omission that may yet prove fatal to the true interests of documentary.

Possibly these critics imagine that they would be doing the cause of documentary a disservice by exposing and attacking "escapism." They must think that, as this form is after all an aspect of documentary, a stepping stone to what they really want to see established, it would be bad policy and tactics to give it a kick in the pants: that it is after all a solid box-office draw and is acquainting the public and the producing companies with an idea of the potentialities of documentary pictures.

This is a dangerous argument for it rests on a fundamental theoretical fallacy. It premises that that which differentiates a documentary picture from others is the use of natural material, and the use of natural material alone. In point of fact pictures by Flaherty *et hoc genus omne* have no real title to be styled "documentary." To do so is to water down the essential purpose of documentary, abort its function and render impotent its *raison d'etre*. The words "idyllic"

or "evasive" as applied to that type of picture are preferable to the term "escapism." For "escapism" lays the emphasis on and evaluates the picture in subjective terms of the director's mind; and not as an objective sociological phenomenon.

Idyllic documentary is documentary in decay, documentary with pernicious anæmia. It is the wax moth of true documentary. It changes the nature of documentary, gives it a new quality, a new form. It may be realistic, deal with actual people and things; but realism inheres not alone in the material used but in the material *plus* treatment. It is the purpose to which a film dealing with natural material is put that classifies it and not the material employed.

It is necessary to define what we mean by documentary before we can solicit the agreement of readers or proceed to discuss the pictures of Flaherty. Documentary or documentary pictures may be defined as the imaginative delineation through the medium of films employing natural material of current social struggle and conflict; the word "social" is used in its widest sense, embracing political, economic and cultural aspects of modern life. This definition follows from a generally accepted dictum that if cinema is to mean anything it must serve a purpose beyond itself, have some justification other than its own very medium. If that is true, there is one purpose above all others that is of paramount importance to-day—that of making a living. But it is not man's relationship with nature and the forces of production in our modern world which is the true subject of documentary, not the Industrial Britain or Cinemagazine approach. Production to-day is adequate for our needs. The struggle is in a different sphere. It is the relationship of man with his fellow man within the existing economic structure of society, his struggle to abolish hunger and unemployment, earn a decent wage and, finally, equate distribution with production—these problems are the taut sinews of modern capitalism. Man's struggle with nature to wrest from her his means of subsistence has lost importance to-day. It is his struggle for the right to divert what he has produced to the interests of humanity that is the vital question. And it is there that documentary has its justification, in truthfully depicting modern economic relationships, in rendering audiences conscious of their interests, of their economic claims, aware of their remedy. That is the true sphere of documentary if it is to serve the most urgent purpose beyond itself.

In the light of the above definition let us consider the position of Flaherty. We are accepting the excellence of his cutting, his fine photography and that superb feeling he has for cinema. These formal attributes are admitted without question. They merely make more regrettable the loss that documentary has suffered by his idyllicism.

Flaherty reveals a joy, an unholy pleasure in his subject matter; he revels in it. And its distinguishing quality is a deliberate turn to the fringes of civilization or to an anthropological present, a present for which the Industrial Revolution need never have taken place; and romanticism and "lo, the noble savage" pervades the whole, wraps it in the old miasmal mist of irrelevancy and distraction. In Flaherty's world of cinema there are no such things as machinery and smoke-grimed factories, hotels and labour camps, unemployment and hunger, tenement houses and mansions. But the primitive Esquimeaux, bronzed Polynesians, virgin snows and coconut trees, surf and elemental storms are the normal material for his celluloid. And it is not as if he is a sensitive soul who cannot bear to contemplate the misery and pain of our modern economic life; Flaherty is no emotional vegetarian. For he can face and shoot individual pain with an all too facile relish (*vide* the tattooing scenes in *Moana*). It is just that he is a throwback, an artistic atavism to whose apologia "I like this idyllism. It satisfies my artistic conscience," there is no reply. For "aesthetic" individualism cannot be overcome by rational argument. The only course to follow is to give the "artistic" product of such people the tribute of our condemnation.

Flaherty is an institution. He rushes to the bucolic present for material to fashion into his exquisitely finished product. Our economic system breeds such types as this by the score and their film prototypes are merely logical reflections of their role in every aspect of modern culture.

Their threat is twofold; in the first place, they are conditioning the mind of the public to this evasive idea of documentary. They are no longer isolated. Numbers of imitators have already sprung up and "mocumentary" is beginning to dig itself in as a normal item in supporting programmes. Secondly, they have led cinemagnates to imagine that documentary deals either with the noble savage in his native environment, or is a spineless, elegant reflection of the pleasant trivialities of modern life. And may the Lord preserve documentary from the support of the commercial producing companies!

Documentary will have a hard fight to establish itself. It is already probably too late to break the title that Flaherty pictures have to the word. Another one may have to be coined. That we have assisted "mocumentary" in establishing itself is unfortunate. But let us now realize, clearly and finally, that the pictures of Flaherty etc., are hindrances to the growth of documentary; that not only must we withdraw all support, not only cease damning with faint praise, but that the time is over-ripe to attack evasive documentary for the menace that it really is.

JOHN GRIERSON REPLIES

FLAHERTY with his *Man of Aran* has caused almost as much division of critical opinion as *Thunder Over Mexico*. David Schrire's article puts the principal objections: that Flaherty is a romantic escapist and that the film is only so much idyllic fudge. As I originally, I think, invented the word "escapism," and used it on Flaherty in the very early days of *Cinema Quarterly*, it may seem scurvy in me to double-cross a supporter. But I do not agree with this estimate either of Flaherty or *Man of Aran*.

In the first place one may not—whatever one's difference in theory—be disrespectful of a great artist and a great teacher. Flaherty taught documentary to create a theme out of natural observation. He brought to it for the first time a colossal patience in the assembly of effects. And this was necessary before the discursive travelogue could become a dramatic—or dialectical—analysis of event.

It is of course reasonable for a later generation of film-makers to want a documentary tougher, more complex, colder and more classical, than the romantic documentary of Flaherty. It is fitting that it should want a documentary in which both material and theme are found in our own social organization and not in literary idyll. But there are considerations one must watch carefully. The first one is that Flaherty was born an explorer, and that is where his talent is: to be accepted on its own ground. It would be foolish, as Professor Saintsbury once remarked, to complain of a pear that it lacks the virtue of the pomegranate.

I call it futile, too, to ask of Flaherty an article which cannot under commercial conditions be possible. Some of us can make do with a thousand pounds on a production, and we buy our independence accordingly. Flaherty's method involves the larger backing of the commercial cinema. He has of necessity to obey its rules. These rules are not always articulated but they are understood. Whatever Flaherty's *carte blanche* on the Aran Islands, the controlling factor, you may take it, was that he did not want to let his masters down. This factor was undoubtedly responsible for making his film more sensational and more spectacular than was expected. It was responsible for making it spectacular at the expense of elements—possibly deeper elements—which under other conditions he might have included.

But rather than complain of the result, I wonder that so much was done within commercial limitation. No English film has done so much. Not half a dozen commercial films in the year can compare with *Man of Aran* in simple feeling and splendid movement. I am all for congratulating Flaherty on pushing the commercial

film brilliantly to its limit. I am all for commending his fortitude in yet another sickening encounter with commercialism.

It is good to remember when these arguments arise how—till the gold plaque came in from Venice—lacking in unanimity was the first enthusiasm. Even *Man of Aran* was too difficult and too high-brow for the trade generally, and might have fizzled indeed if Flaherty has not gone out himself with his collection of Islanders to ballyhoo it into appreciation. It plainly is a difficult world to manage anything at all in, when the artist has to turn showman in self defence.

Flaherty not only had to make the film but he had to sell it. Wardour Street, which knows how to sell its own line of damarroids, has never the belief nor the salesmanship, to sell anything different. Where, as in the case of France, the *Man of Aran* job was left to the usual commercial agents, the film was cut to a five-reeler and billed below the line as a subsidiary feature. As they congratulate themselves on their gold plaque, Gaumont-British should pause to consider this strange anomaly.

A last consideration, which Flaherty himself urges strongly. *Man of Aran* has been blamed for distorting the life of the Islanders, for going back into time for its shark hunting and its dangers, for telling a false story. But is it unreasonable for the artist to distil life over a period of time and deliver only the essence of it? Seen as the story of mankind over a period of a thousand years, the story of the Arans is very much this story of man against the sea and woman against the skyline. It is a simple story, but it is an essential story, for nothing emerges out of time except bravery. If I part company with Flaherty at that point, it is because I like my braveries to emerge otherwise than from the sea, and stand otherwise than against the sky. I imagine they shine as bravely in the pursuit of Irish landlords as in the pursuit of Irish sharks.

In the commercial cinema, however, sharks are definitely preferable. You can stuff them and show them in a Wardour Street window. You can even cut them down, as G.-B. did, to fit the window. You cannot, unfortunately, do the same with Irish landlords. That is the case for Flaherty.

RECORD OF SUBSTANDARD FILMS

IN RESPONSE to numerous enquiries *Cinema Quarterly* is compiling a record of sub-standard films of a documentary, educational, or experimental nature. Both amateur and commercial producers are invited to submit details of such films, including contents, size, length, and also rates and conditions of hiring.

ITALY'S "INTERNATIONAL" INSTITUTE

G. F. NOXON

On the Via Nomentana outside the ancient Papal walls of Rome, lies a large property surrounded by a high sun-baked wall and watched over by a number of rather embarassed-looking armed guards. Somehow, in this quiet Roman suburb they feel themselves hopelessly out of place. They guard the Villa Torlonia. Within the walls there are actually two villas, the one elegant, the other a trifle down-at-heel. The former villa is the home of Benito Mussolini and the latter is the seat of that somwhat obscure organization—The International Institute of Educational Cinematography. The I.I.E.C. sits, as it were, in Mussolini's back yard. It was founded on the Duce's direct instigation in 1929 in affiliation with the League of Nations. It has therefore an official link with the League and flies League colours over its international business. It is not however financed by the League but by Signor Mussolini through the Italian Government which pays to the tune of one million lira per annum to maintain this so called international "Institute." At the foundation appeals were of course made to other goverments for finance, but contributions were scanty and rare. Great Britain, America, France and Germany have given nothing. Poland, Hungary and Roumania have made minute contributions. The finance of the Institute remains 99 per cent. Italian.

Anyone who has the least knowledge of Signor Mussolini's political methods will ask immediately why he chooses to foot the bill for this Institute, and anyone who knows Mussolini's methods well will at once find the answer. Wherever the original idea of an International Institute of Educational Cinematography cropped up, it was and still is a brilliant conception. Mussolini's move to give the idea some sort of concrete shape, which in the boom year of '29 passed almost unnoticed as just one more extravagance of the expansionist mentality, now appears as further proof of his political astuteness.

It is curious that the realization of the cinema as a potent medium for propaganda seems to come naturally to one kind of politician and to escape the perception of others entirely. To Mussolini it was obvious that the investment of a mere million lira a year was a cheap price to pay for the control of the I.I.E.C., which, while

flying League of Nations colours, would yet remain his own propaganda organization, both internally and internationally, by simple reason of his financial control.

To give the Institute the requisite International flavour a Governing Body was formed. Governors were chosen from a variety of countries and the token to Internationalism was paid. The altogether estimable gentlemen who form this governing body convene once a year at Rome in the glorious autumn weather for which that city is justly famed. They pass resolutions and they make recommendations, they take drives into the Castelli Romani, are enthusiastic over the sunsets of the late year, are entertained at garden parties. It is all very charming and the Governors return to their various homelands with feelings of quiet satisfaction.

But what of the Institute's work throughout the year? What sort of structure is there behind the façade of its long name? Is it a solid useful building really serving the cause of an international cinema?

The chief work of the Institute is the publication of a monthly review in five languages. Numerous periodicals are read and notes are made. There is a library. There is much cataloguing. There is a great deal of idling.

The staff of this "International Institute" is composed largely of Italians. Many of them hold unabashed sinecures by reason of party influence. Few have the least idea what a film is and they feel no compulsion to instruct themselves. Then there are the "editors" of the Review: An Italian Editor, a French Editor, a Spanish Editor, a German Editor, an English Editor. These gentlemen are editors only in name; actually, they spend the greater part of their time translating and have practically no say in the make-up of the Review. They have no control whatsoever of the policy. They are part of the international façade. The policy of the Institute and the Review is under the sole control of Signor Luciano de Feo, the Director, who is doubtless inspired on issues of importance by communications from above. The Institute is not located in Mussolini's back yard for nothing. De Feo is not a newcomer on the Fascist scene. He was at one time Director of the Italian State Film Organization—LUCE, which supplies carefully vetted news-reels to all Italian cinemas. It is known that he enjoys the Duce's favour and is well established in the party.

Apart from the Review, de Feo has a couple of hobby horses—"the international exchange of educational films" and the compilation of an international encyclopædia of cinema terms. He has likewise signified the Institute's interest in the formation of an international catalogue of worthy educational films—worthiness to be decided by the I.I.E.C. The gentlemen of the Governing Body

can find nothing to quarrel with in these pious and useful aspirations. They make their yearly pilgrimage and remark, as the English member of the Governing Body once remarked—"After all, he who pays the piper calls the tune."

It is true that de Feo's tune is a trifle weak. The Review is frankly so badly put together that, even though it does from time to time contain good work, few can bother to sort out the grain from so much chaff. The Directors' efforts in other directions have met with little success—with one notable exception: the Venice Exhibition film show is first rate travel ballyhoo for Italy. And here lies the danger: Italian control of an "International Institute," with Italian aims behind it, not only fails to advance the truly international purposes of the cinema but serves to block the path for a real international organization. The general ineffectiveness of the I.I.E.C. precludes it doing any serious harm and must incidentally give Mussolini the idea that his million lira might be otherwise more ably administered to the same purpose. And it is just possible that our own carefully organized national Film Institute and other similar national organizations may be deceived into co-operation with the I.I.E.C. through ignorance of its real nature.

The intention of the I.I.E.C., is not educational but political. It is not an international institute in any sense: it merely exploits internationalism for its own national propaganda purposes.

66 FILMS IN A LIDO HOTEL

P. M. PASINETTI

AN EXHIBITION of Cinematographic Art was held in Venice at the Hotel Excelsior, Lido, in August. I understand that it was a great financial success and a great asset to Venice as a means of attracting tourists; but, officially, the attraction of tourists was not a concern of the organizers and, although the circumstances frequently made it difficult, I attempted to keep in mind that I was attending an exhibition of art.

The Exhibition lasted twenty-seven days and sixty-six films were presented. These were generally of the previous year and the majority of them had been shown in Britain. In Italy, foreign films

are not at present shown in their original languages, nor are there cinemas which specialize in foreign films, such as the Academy in London, though I understand several small ones are to be founded now. Films are shown in dubbed versions and the effect is often cruel. Thus one of the attractions of the Exhibition for us in Italy was that the films were shown in their original versions.

My first impressions of the programmes were not favourable, as it was immediately clear that the organizers did not intend to present only films of outstanding artistic importance. Much shoddy stuff was included in the programmes. Two major films and several shorts were presented each evening, with supplementary morning and afternoon performances on the last days. The most interesting Soviet films were presented privately in the forenoons.

As has been announced, the Mussolini prize for a foreign film was awarded to Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, while the prize for an Italian film was given to *Teresa Confalonieri*, an episode of our Risorgimento, a heroic episode of which we are proud, even if the pride does not extend to the film. Such films as *Man of Aran* and Machaty's *Ekstase* gave me a thrill of æsthetic pleasure, even if I had seen the former previously in Ireland; but it was maddening to find included in an Exhibition of Cinematographic Art *Death Takes a Holiday*—its performance being announced as the first in Europe which, even if it had been true, was hardly an honour; and *Going Hollywood* with Marion Davies, the star meanwhile appearing in the hall of the hotel, signing post-cards. Fan worship was by no means absent from this Exhibition of Cinematographic Art.

So many films seen within a short time provided special opportunities for comparison, particularly from the point of view of national characteristics in production. I do not bring it forward as a new observation, but the decadence of American production was one of the things most apparent at the Exhibition. The American system with its standardization, fear of experiment and lavish expenditure on duplicating what has been previously found successful, is failing. At a time when the historical film was regarded as suspect, *The Private Life of Henry VIII* appeared as an independent and courageous production; while *The Private Life of Don Juan*, notoriously inferior to the first film, seems to have been produced in accord with the American system of repeating what has been already found successful. The state of American production to-day shows how dangerous that system is. Let Europeans use it as an experience *in corpore vili*. *Lot in Sodom* was the most interesting example of American film art. It was amusing to find an experiment in abstract coming from America! Very few could follow it, but all admired its technical perfection. The commercial film was much more widely represented, but the choice of pictures was often remarkably unin-

telligent. I hope that on a future occasion, a committee shall not ask the different nations to send whatever they please, but that an approach will be made direct to the production firms for definite films. Moreover, we would prefer to see ten films rather than sixty-six.

European production appears to be most hopeful when it is not under the control of the commercially-minded who regard film-making merely as a method of making money. Such small countries as Czechoslovakia and Holland often provide the best examples of independent and courageous artistic production.

There is nothing to prevent anyone having a thousand films shown in the garden of a grand hotel, without any significance attached to the selection, the exhibition intended to provide only a pleasant pastime. But it is a different matter when such a series of performances is described as an International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art. Film art is not a definition to be treated lightly. The directors whose work is presented—and the organizers of the Exhibition themselves—should be people who already have some standing in the sphere of film art, or whose work at the Exhibition is going to reveal their worthiness. The programmes might be arranged to reflect aspects of the development of the film: comparisons for example, between primitive and contemporary films, obtained by short and representative excerpts. Similarly, the outstanding film artists ought not to be forgotten and programmes could be devoted to the story of Pabst's genius or of Mamoulian's cleverness, or to the career of any other prominent director. Of the *Going Hollywood* type of film, ten yards of celluloid could be selected to show *what the film is not to be.*

The responsibility of the organizers grows when they publicize the Exhibition and attract many people. Under such conditions, the audience will include not only students of the cinema but a large percentage who are cinematographically uneducated. The character of the exhibition is particularly to be regretted when, as at present, education in film matters is spreading. That education at present is not at all complete, as was shown at the Lido during the performace of Rutten's *Dood Water* (Holland), but undoubtedly people are developing their film taste, are able to distinguish the work of the major directors and are becoming familiar with film technicalities. It is unfortunate that lovers of good cinema should have been deceived by an exhibition so pompously announced and should have been again confronted with the invasion of industry into art when they thought that, for once, they could have shed their worries on this score and left them at the entrance of the Hotel Excelsior like a wet umbrella.

EXPERIMENTS IN COUNTERPOINT

HERBERT READ

EVER since sound became a practical adjunct of the films, the commercial producers seem to have had no other desire than to use it in the interests of an ever faithful naturalism. Indeed, naturalism is the unintelligent standard of all the arts still controlled by people other than artists. In the arts of painting, sculpture and poetry, where the artist is an individualist in supreme control of the process of production, the bourgeois ideals of the nineteenth century are a thing of the past. It is only in industrial art, and in arts like the theatre and the film, in which the control is financial or capitalist, that the creative activity is inhibited or distorted in the interests of ideals and policies external to art.

The comparison of the film with the art of painting is particularly instructive, because in so far as both are visual arts, and both arts which use a two-dimensional surface for their projection and presentation, their problems are to that extent identical. Naturally the complete difference of technique soon puts an end to the value of such comparisons, but even in technique it is worth insisting on the actual plasticity of the camera's material (not so very far removed from the plasticity of paint) ; and even, on the other hand, on the concreteness of the painter's materials. Both arts, we might say, are concerned with the arrangement of solids in relation to light.

Painting, in the last fifty or sixty years, has completely liberated itself from the naturalistic convention ; it is safe to say that there is not a living painter of distinction in the world to-day who regards the exact imitation of natural effects as the aim of his art. Even the Academicians pay their tribute to some mild form of impressionism ; whilst at the other extreme the most talented painters in Europe have completely divorced their art from any conventional notion of reality, and attempt to create a new order of reality. That new order may be suggested by the natural world, or may be of an intuitive or hallucinatory origin ; but essentially it is a reality parallel to the existing order of things. Some painters call it a super-reality (*surréalité*), but admittedly that is rather an arrogant assumption ; it is sufficient to call it another order of reality.

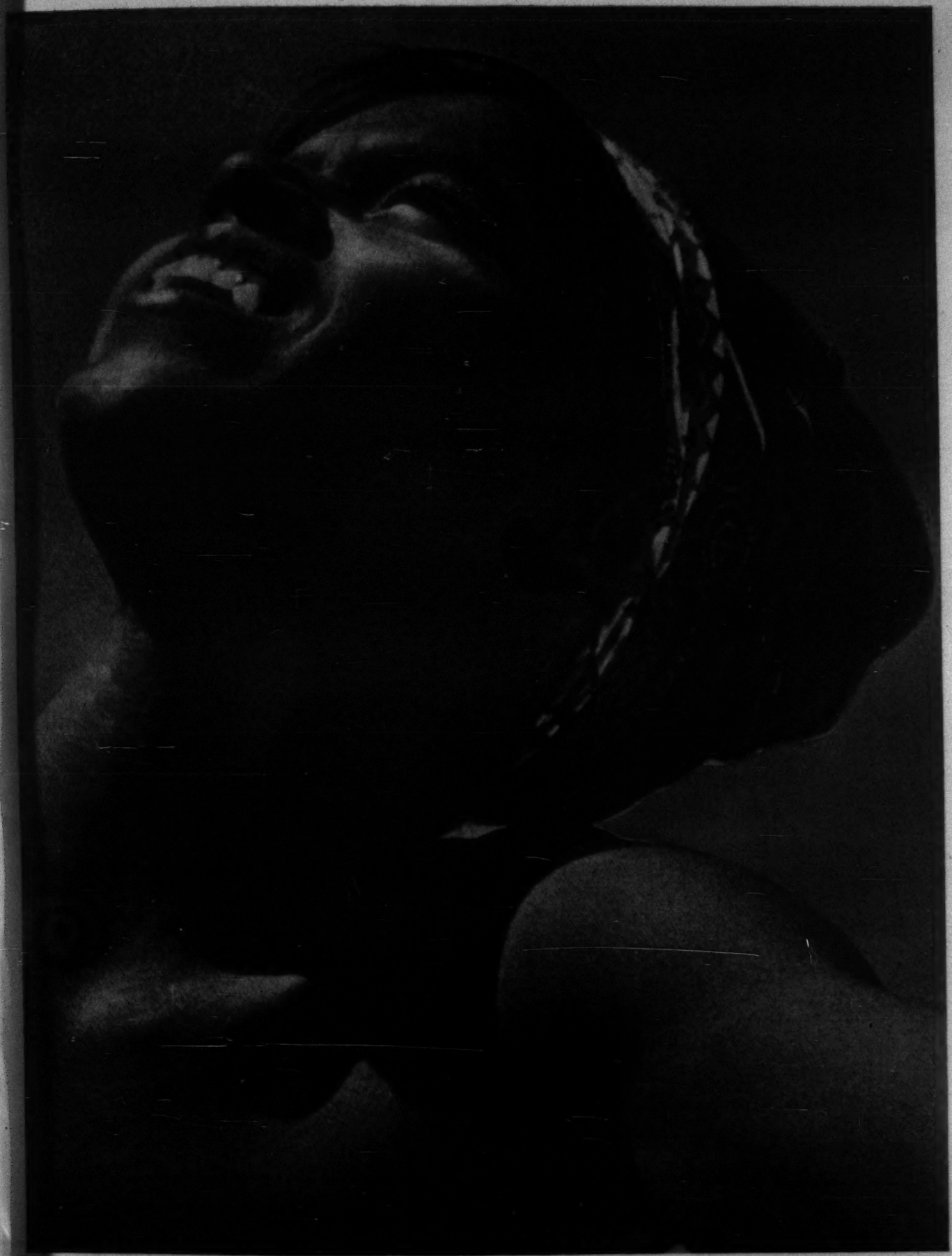
The potentiality of the film (once it becomes the mode of expression of the artist) is already great purely as film ; but the

invention of sound-recording apparatus has more than doubled that potentiality. For it means the creation, not merely of a realistic adjunct, adding the sensation of hearing to the sensation of sight as a synchronized reproduction of reality ; but actually the creation of another dimension in the art of the cinema. The independence of the sound strip, both in recording and montage, means that sight and sound can be combined in a counterpoint which is entirely independent of realism. Rudolf Arnheim expresses the idea neatly : " The principle of sound film demands that picture and sound shall not do the same work simultaneously but that they shall share the work—the sound to convey one thing and the picture another, and the two jointly to give a complete impression."*

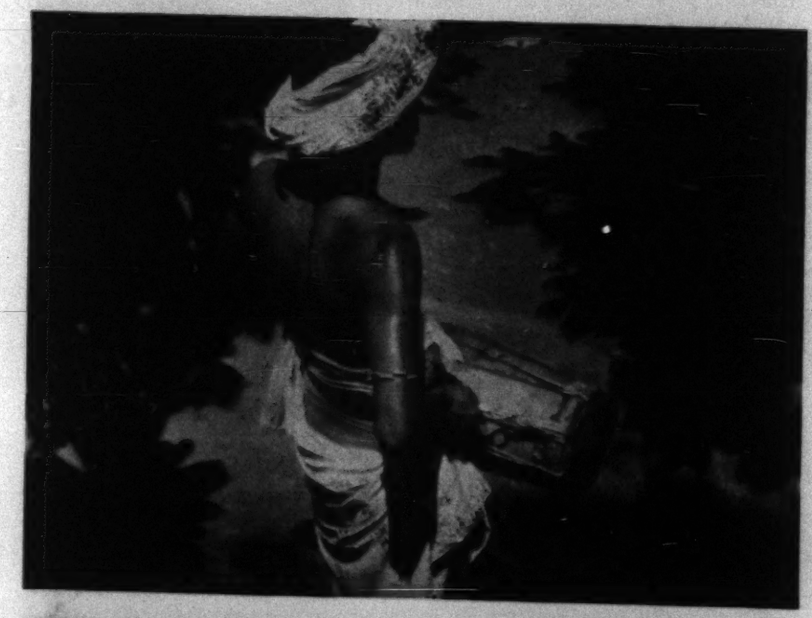
Arnheim, in his interesting chapter on " Asynchronism," discusses some of the possibilities and dangers of this new technical device. A certain welding-together of incongruities only ends, as he points out, in a chaotic pseudo unity. There must be a certain notional or imaginative unity behind every combination—a simple illustration would be the combination of the sound of rhythmic machinery and a marching army ; the machinery might alternate with, or even be superimposed upon, the sound of a marching song. But obviously such combinations are going to call for great aesthetic tact —indeed, for a new type of film artist, as much musician as producer, who builds up symphonies of sight and sound.

In one of those few laboratories of experiment which exist in the world—the G.P.O. Film Unit, which has succeeded to the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit—John Grierson and Alberto Cavalcanti have been carrying out experiments in this direction which are of the greatest interest. They are limited by the kind of film they are required to produce—documentary and propaganda—but even within these limits they have shown how usefully this counterpoint of sight and sound can be developed. Perhaps the most ambitious of these experiments is a comedy, *Pett and Pott*, directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. Here a large variety of asynchronous devices are used to produce special effects. In addition to what might be regarded as the normal device—an accompaniment of music which induces a sympathetic mood, there are suggestions of a more complicated symphonic construction; the interweaving of direct naturalistic sounds with the formal musical rhythm—at one point, for example, the meaningless clatter of a rough-and-tumble fight is reinforced by the strains of a drum-and-fife band, and the fight proceeds to the rhythm of the music. More original is the formalized chorus used, for example, in a scene which depicts a suburban train, full of identical suburbanites reading identical evening papers. They begin to read the headings of the latest suburban sensation—a robbery

* Film : London, Faber & Faber, 15s.



From Basil Wright's documentary, "The Song of Ceylon."
Recording is in progress at the G.P.O. studio at Blackheath.



Further stills from
Basil Wright's documentary
of Ceylon.

with violence. Their voices gradually rise in chorus and the chorus beats out a rhythm which is the rhythm of the train. The train whistles, and the scene fades out to an actual scene of violence, the whistle of the train continuing as a woman's scream. *Pett and Pott* is an excellent example of popular comedy heightened by an intelligent use of the potentialities of cinema technique. In a more serious context two new documentary films, *6.30 Collection* (E. Anstey and R. H. Watt) and *Weather Forecast* (Evelyn Spice), show a discreet use of sound symbolism—the diminishing sound of an aeroplane to suggest height, sounds of various modes of transport as a background to the final sorting of letters, various storm sounds "off" when all that is visible is the heaving sea, or the storm signal. The most advanced use of a continuous but disconnected sound strip is found in *Granton Trawler*—a simple documentary film shot with a hand-camera by Grierson and adapted for the screen with the aid of Cavalcanti. The "orchestral" means are extremely primitive—a mouth organ, a drum, the conversation of some Scots fishermen, but all combined in a symphonic effect. The *subject* of the conversation, for example, is of no importance—actually it is football; it is the impressionistic character of the vocal sounds that combine with other sounds to produce an asynchronous reinforcement of the visual effect.

Such experiments mark only the infancy of a new development in film technique. I think the analogy with counterpoint in music is fairly justifiable, and just as counterpoint in music led to a completely new development of the art, so this new counterpoint of sight and sound may lead to a completely new kind of film. But the difficulties ahead are enormous. For one thing, the device must go beyond mere impressionism, to some synthesis of a more abstract or formal nature. But before such an art can be possible, we have to develop a new type of artist—an artist who combines visual and aural sensibility and can use them simultaneously in the service of that particular plastic imagination which is the mark of the true film creator.

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MANUAL OF LAW FOR THE CINEMA TRADE. By Gordon Alchin (London Pitman, 30s.). A comprehensive work which will enable anyone to obtain information on any matter of a legal nature connected with the production or exhibition of films. The sections dealing with statutory and local regulations governing performances are of special value to everyone engaged in non-theatrical exhibition. For producers the chapters on the subject matter of films and sound records have a particular interest in view of the many copyright questions involved in production.
THE 1934-35 MOTION PICTURE ALMANAC. (New York, Quigley Publishing Co. 20s.). Over 1,000 pages of reference dealing with every aspect of commercial film production in America. There is a comprehensive who's who covering actors, technicians and executives, details of the year's film output, and full particulars of every organization connected with the American industry. There is also printed the full text of the famous Production Code of Ethics.

THE FUNCTION OF THE CAMERA-MAN

CURT COURANT

Interviewed by Ernest Dyer

"In the first place," said Courant, "the word 'cameraman' is unfortunate. The suggestion it conveys is too limited, too technical 'Chief artistic collaborator,' were the phrase not so clumsy, would be less misleading. The cameraman collaborates with the director and the scenic designer and others so as to produce an artistic picture. At the same time he is the captain of a team of specialists. On this film, for example"—we had just come off the sets of *The Iron Duke*—"I am 'chief cameraman.' I have as assistants two 'first cameramen' and four 'assistant cameramen'—one first and one 'second' assistant to each camera. (We shoot everything through at least two cameras). Then there are all the studio electricians.

"You ask me how far the cameraman is creative. Well, what does good camera-work imply? Is it just to secure a clear, clean, rich picture—a 'good photo' in the Kodak sense of the word? This is only the basis. No, good camerawork is to give to each scene the atmosphere which the scenario of the particular film calls for. Each room, each set, each exterior has to reflect the mood which is suggested by a reading of the scene. If the mood of the scene is sad, then the camerawork must be in harmony and must invest the scene with just the right *ambience*. I read the scenario like an actor and then try to interpret it in terms of atmosphere. Sometimes perhaps the result may not be 'good' photography in the Kodak sense, but that does not matter if it is the right camerawork artistically for that scene."

E. D.: "So we cannot evaluate any shot fairly apart from its sequence. That seems to me well illustrated by your own work in *Ces Messieurs de la Santé* where the lighting seems to change with the period, from the murky gas gloom of the little shop to the electric radiance of the modern store."

C. C.: "In those early scenes I wanted to make you *feel* the dust. You do not want the screen always bright. Think of the paintings of Menzel and Rembrant, so dark that you have to go right up to them, yet perfect in mood. We cameramen are after the same things as the old painters. Instead of pigments and brushes we

use lamps. We paint with light. Instead of colours we have a scale in monochrome. But what our cameras record is what our imaginations create when we paint our sets with light."

E. D.: "To what extent do you control the sets themselves?"

C. C.: "That is a matter of collaboration with the designer and director before shooting begins. We discuss the sketches and models."

E. D.: "But that scene you have just been shooting, with that broken gun-wheel you arranged so carefully upon the mound, does your script give you the details of that?"

C. C.: "Oh, no. Such a scene can be arranged upon the floor. Then I paint my sky-cloth with light to help the composition. That big ball-room set you saw us shooting the other day—every column of it has its roundness touched off by some specially placed light, so that the scene had form and depth and pictorial balance as well as the softness appropriate to candle-illumination. The lighting made it a composition."

E. D.: "What of the risk that shots with intrinsic pictorial appeal may distract from the thematic content of the film? Robert Edmund Jones says that he is most content with his stage settings when they fit a performance so perfectly that the audience does not notice them. Does not that apply to camerawork?"

C. C.: "The photography should enforce, not distract from, the thematic content. Selfish photography is like over-acting. The beauty of camerawork must be absolutely lap-dissolved with the mood of the story. It is like some vital part in the mechanism of a watch. The audience—members of the average audience—should never be aware of the camera.

"For instance, the camera's angle of vision is more limited than that of the human eye, so that if we wish to convey the impression of the unhampered movements and gestures of George Arliss we have to follow him with pan and track and keep him always 'trained' by a moving focus. We must not allow him to be the prisoner of the frame. But the audience is not aware of that constant camera movement. When the audience feels that anything is technical then it is bad. So with angles. The right angle is the natural angle. When a technical trick is so good that the audience does not see that a trick is being used then it is artistic camerawork.

"Look at that set in there. A sound-stage lumped with 100 tons of dirt and turned into the battlefield of Waterloo. 30 electricians and 7,000 amps to light it. An artificial sky within a few dozen feet of the foreground. Yet the camera will give you a perfect illusion of miles of depth. Shafts of sunlight touching the stone walls and the branches of the tree. Every blade of grass almost with its separate lighting. The impression of an exterior rendered in the studio by artificial light!"

E. D.: "But why shoot it in a studio? Why not go outside to begin with?"

C. C.: "Good! Consider the scene. It is the afternoon of battle, between day and evening. There is a feeling of hopelessness on the part of the French. Ney makes his pathetic last stand. It calls for an atmosphere that is mellow and *triste*. What odds on finding that lighting when you wanted it in Nature! What hopes of *keeping* it fixed, if need be, for two days! Besides, there is the action to be lit, too. That may want lighting differently from the set. Different players need different lighting. I do not light Arliss as I light Veidt. We experimented and found the quality of character lighting which would give Arliss the rugged Wellington mask."

E. D.: "So that you would light Arliss differently in two different films?"

C. C.: "Quite. A young girl on the other hand would need soft lighting."

E. D.: "To what extent can you modify the script once you are working upon it?"

C. C.: "The camerman could always put a proposition to the director. Saville, though, works very close to script."

E. D.: "To what extent are you limited on the floor?"

C. C.: "Only by time. I have to have my lamps ready by the time the director is ready. Often perhaps I could go on trying still better lighting. But you cannot hold up a studio where hundreds of salaried players may be waiting."

E. D.: "To what extent can you control the processing or indulge in the tricks of delayed development and so on, beloved by the amateur photographer?"

C.C.: "Developing is mechanical, automatic, entirely uniform. The whole of a day's work, perhaps twenty set-ups—will be developed together in one strip. And the sound-track must have absolutely even development. (That is only one of the limitations imposed by sound).

"It means that the cameraman in the studio is responsible for the balance of light and shade in the film shown on the screen. Day after day, through some 1,500 different set-ups, each with its slightly individual quality of lighting, he has to maintain a general level of light. All the time he has to have in mind the finished product on the screen.

"You ask how he is a creative artist. Consider. A camera is a machine, a vehicle for the film; the lens is a piece of dead glass; a lamp is a lamp; the film itself is a chemical product; the projector is another machine, another vehicle. The man who can visualize a scene in terms of these dead things and from them create a work of living beauty, he is a creative artist. That is my 'cry.' "

From "Atalante," a French film of barge life, by the late Jean Vigo.

From "Weather Forecast,"
a G.P.O. film.
Production: John Grierson.
Direction: Evelyn Spice.

WAGNER AND FILM

DALLAS BOWER

HUGH MACDIARMID's article in the Spring issue of *Cinema Quarterly* gives me a cue. A cue moreover, awaited with growing impatience, for, with my belief never disturbed, I have been waiting a long while in the wings. One memorable evening in Bloomsbury (such a fitting environment!) I outlined to Miss C. A. Lejeune my ideas upon the obvious association of Wagnerian music-drama theory and sound-film. Those of my friends, or persons whom I choose so to call, who may read this know that the subject is my favourite pastime; and many in varying degrees of production eminence have suffered. Or so I feel. For never do I appear to have convinced anybody worth convincing. Even the distinguished critic of "The Observer" merely said "Yes" to everything I said. Here, I thought was a candidate fitted for inefficient continuity keeping, not the Omniscient Critic of my imagination. But, in retrospect, I thought how wrong I had been in my estimate, for quite obviously the lady knew nothing about Wagner. Nor do the majority of film theorists—not even a little bit. Which gives my case an added significance, I feel; for if they did, they would see how simple it is.

Now, MacDiarmid, as a poet, will have pity on me maybe; at least, he will listen. And MacDiarmid, dropping as he does on bended knee as T. S. Eliot passes, will probably think Wagner just too too much; but I would have him bear with me for a short while. The quintessence of his article is a plea for the poetic film. That if a film has aesthetic sensibility it cannot therefore be a "proposition for showmen" is slowly losing weight with the better film-trade critics, because the box-office is beginning to show to the contrary. Let us then, accept the commercial desirability of the *poetic* film, using the term *poetic* in MacDiarmid's sense. Accepting also, the rather obvious premise that the poetry, the music and the film must be specially composed, synthesized as a co-operative whole, may we not ask if such a film potentially does not exist? Inevitably, said Wagner, the poet's art, in its sublimest moments, becomes music. And he chose to write his epic poems (forget how bad they may be as pure poetry) in a medium which asked for visual representation, physically free. That he needed visual representation he could not substantiate; essentially and primarily a man of the theatre, wish-

fulfilment played its part. But he knew the physiological value in relation to aesthetical appreciation of aural and visual synchronization. Possibly that was his excuse for the stage, because he knew the stage was inadequate for a scientifically genuine synthesis. It lacked physical freedom; and he was only on the edge of understanding the difference *during his lifetime* between spatial and temporal art-forms. In short, he needed cinema. Had the vast technical resources of the modern cinema *deus ex machina* been available to him, one wonders how different in practical construction his music-dramas would be. His theory is a long way from his practice. He knew his ideal was unattainable, and he knew also just how far he could go in his stage directions without destroying the respect of his stage machinist. For instance "Rhinegold" Scene I runs :—

"At the bottom of the Rhine. Greenish twilight, lighter above, darker below. The upper part of the scene is filled with moving water which restlessly streams from R. to L. Towards the ground the waters resolve themselves into a fine mist, so that the space to a man's height from the stage seems free from water, which flows like a train of clouds over the gloomy depths. Everywhere are steep points of rock jutting up from the depths and enclosing the whole stage. All the ground is broken into a wild confusion of jagged pieces, so that there is no level place, while on all sides darkness indicates other deeper fissures. Round the rock in the centre of the stage, whence its peak rises higher into lighter water, one of the RHINE-NYMPHS is seen merrily swimming."

We most of us know what a Covent Garden (or even a Bayreuth) Rhine-nymph looks like. It can be done—up to a point. And largely, the same might apply to film. We are at once confronted with the human consideration. O, those fat Isoldes! And a Tristan nearer fifty than thirty. We have our physical freedom, we can by scenario construction and a certain technique in shooting achieve real movement in contradistinction to film movement—in fact, the poetic film in the Wagnerian sense tends to sweep Kushelov into the dustbin—but we are still faced with the purely physiological problem. It is only the magic of the music that permits us at all to believe in an elderly Siegfried. From the hideous discomfort of the gallery or the delicious debauchery of a thirty-five shilling stall, we cannot see the facial contortions that are actually taking place on the stage. Even with Messrs. Negretti and Zambra's most powerful assistance, that strange desire to see the singer nearer cannot by any conceivable means be satisfied to the extent it could be in a close-up on the screen. And a head and shoulder close-up of Siegfried singing would be revolting. The makers of "musicals" soon found out that one cannot play a person singing nearer than three-quarters figure height in medium shot. As a special treat

we occasionally get a big head of Jeanette MacDonald singing in bed; but only for a little while. Just a short shot so that we know the miserable editor has been given something to which he can cut. No: in our new Wagnerian theatre we cannot tolerate the idea of *seeing* the singers sing but we might be prepared to consider *hearing* a different voice to that of the person seen on the screen. There would, of course, be no question of lip synchronization either. We would use two casts: visual and aural. I was once audacious enough, after a preliminary discussion, to ask Elisabeth Bergner if she would like to play a visual Isolde. She said it would probably be very amusing for children. I suppose I could not have made myself less understood. For Bergner, whose discourse on and knowledge of Wagnerian histrionics is as brilliant as her appreciation of Pudovkin is stimulating, knew very well I was serious. But Paul Czinner (who is a Wagnerian student) has really concluded any argument as to the final shape a Wagnerian adaptation should take. One could possibly use part of the vocal line; but in the main, one would use the *Sprech-melodie* of the line and it would be spoken from the screen. Thus, we have largely solved the physiological problem.

As to the fitness of a Wagnerian adaptation, that of course, is another question. I suspect MacDiarmid might say no. We know "The Ring" is unwieldy and the material out-of-hand; we treat its devices, its *leit-motiv* and visual symbolism as elementary now, but the old magic still remains. The human universals are in its spirit; and to depreciate it or Wagner, like Sacheverall Sitwell, is coming near to depreciating "Lear." And no matter what our enthusiasm for cinema, we know that no film ever made has one tenth of the intrinsic value of "Lear." The affinity between Shakespeare and Wagner it would be redundant for me to discuss; of both it can be said for certain they occupy seats in immortality very close; of Shakespeare that he was the greater artist even if only because he was so much less a charlatan. Where the poetic film is concerned, the choice of existing material is relatively unimportant; it matters little if it be "Tristan" or "The Tempest" (with the magnificent Sibelius score), an attempt at "The Divine Comedy" or "Le Mort d'Arthur." But let us remember that Shakespeare, who would have delighted in cycloramas and revolving stages (O, heresy!) and Wagner, who would have relished them, were both, greatest of poets and greatest of composers respectively, great scenarists. They burst the walls of their theatre on every hand. Can we not work as interpretive artists in putting some of their work into the medium which fits it best? Should we not be doing better work cinematically in the first instance than doing new work? For maybe, in the words of a Hollywood supervising production executive, "There don't seem to be no Shakespeare around this joint, boys!"

THE FILM ABROAD

FILMS IN PARIS

ALEXANDER WERTH

THE death of the *avant garde* movement is an old story, but its tragedy still clings to all consideration of French cinema. Nowhere is the victory of cheap commercialism so resented and the outlook of directors so hopeless. The French *avant gardists* were innocents. They built a school of cinema, and the films of Cavalcanti, Clair, Epstein and Jean Renoir created a specialized but powerful audience. Both the distributors who handled them and the little theatres which showed them prospered. Unfortunately, the distributors and the exhibitors made money and they used it to go utterly commercial. The directors were abandoned. The specialized audience was abandoned for the boys and girls of the boulevards. That specialized audience has disappeared. Complacent theatre directors tell you so.

The best film of the moment is Jean Vigo's *Atalante*, partly financed, they say, by Vigo himself. A great mistake the Film Society not taking last season *Zero de Conduite*, his satire of school life, and one they must make up for this year. Vigo is young, and at 26 his style has not yet matured, but he is strangely fanciful—with little outbursts of surrealist imagery that mark him a poet.

Fritz Lang's latest film *Liliom* is out. It appears under Pommer's production but, as Pommer was ill most of the time, the film is very much Lang's. This is a fairly ordinary account of the tale in which Liliom, the tough of the sideshows, lives and loves and fights his way to an early death, ascends into heaven, and is given his day on earth after sixteen years in purgatory to make amends. The heaven scenes are in the manner of *Metropolis*. Angels sit amphitheatre fashion on clouds with stars twinkling about, and judgment is a star-dusted version of the police court Liliom abandoned below. This Sunday school dream is presented literally, without poetry or satire or fun. But the film is well made and, as to trick work, excellent. Lang got his Hollywood contract on this.

By coincidence *Marie* by Fejos, with Annabella, has just come in from Hungary, with the self-same theme. Marie, the little girl with the illegitimate baby, is hunted and harried from door to door, till, when the baby is taken away from her, she too dies and ascends into a star-dusted heaven. There is word of *Marie* going to the London Academy, though the English censorship ordinarily bans all

reference to heaven. Halcyon horizons must be strictly de Mille.

From the French studios themselves, there is only *Le Grand Jeu* to take account of: a *Beau Geste* affair by Feyder out of Algeria and the legionnaires. It is an efficient performance with fine acting by Feyder's wife, Francoise Rosay, and proves that the French cinema can occasionally make a film as well as Hollywood. But this tragedy of a young man who, abandoned by a mercenary mistress, finds a better hearted double in the Sahara, is hardly important. Feyder has lost the command of atmosphere which made *Atlantide* great ten years ago.

What a fine film in comparison to all these is *La Chienne*, a three-year old Renoir which is still running, and what a pity it is the censor in England has banned it. It is sentimental in part, with its story of a bank clerk who falls in love with a prostitute and finally murders her, but in the total effect of its descriptive realism and finely built action, it is a great film—the greatest Renoir has done. The murder scene is near to Dostoievsky.

Renoir is not working. Feyder is not working. Jean Lods has had to find asylum in Russia. Jean Vigo is too ill to work. Epstein and Clair are tossing fanfares in the commercial circuit. Cavalcanti in England seems to have found freedom to experiment and carry on the tradition of the old days. He gave a private show of *Pett and Pott* recently, at the F.I.F. theatre on the Champs Elysées. The audience rose to its many innovations of sound, and it was a great personal triumph for him.

AMERICA

At the present time, when within the movie industry it is practically impossible to produce a vital picture, mystery stories offer promising material to the creative director. Innocuous stuff for the most part, mysteries seldom provoke the antagonism of censors, sensitive patriots, religious, moral and political traditionalists, and other powerful groups. Their plots are exciting, clear cut, and visual rather than intellectual. And because they generally make money, the producer is inclined to allow the director more than usual freedom. Thus it is that two of the best directed Hollywood films of the last quarter are mysteries, *Fog Over Frisco*, directed by William Dieterle, and *The Thin Man*, directed by W. S. Van Dyke.

R.K.O., having experimented in Technicolor for some time, has recently produced a colour short, *Cucharacha* (cockroach), named after the popular Mexican song which is worked into the story. The plot is stereotyped and inconsequential. The direction is pro-

saic. What is significant to the producer as well as the critic, is the colour, which has been supervised by Edmund Jones, the Broadway stage designer.

Reactions to the colour after seeing one screening: (1) Enjoyed observing for the first time chromatic detail in non-animated film worked out by an artist. Shades, blending, contrasts of colours built up into a composition, in contrast to the usual colour post-card effect. (2) Bewildered by having to watch colour, direction, movement, and story all at once. Almost like trying to see everything at a three ring circus. (3) Noticed a theatricalness in the design of the coloured set. Seemed that the set was not designed for camera angles, close-ups, and dolley shots. (4) Felt that colour does the following: gives the material a stereoscopic roundness and unusual depth; emphasizes what may not be desired, such as a bright orange tie in a close-up; spoils the possibilities of two-dimensional design present in black-and-white film. (5) Amused at the unimaginative and incomplete attempt to use colour as an intrinsic part of the plot: a face darkens from embarrassment in rather halo fashion with the aid of a spot light (Disney's Big Bad Wolf changed colour more convincingly), and yet a few minutes later the same face, in agony from the effect of an over seasoned salad, doesn't change in colour; a scene of anger is played before a wall bathed in passionate red-orange light, while two steps to the right the wall is a green grey. (6) Concluded that colour paradoxically renders natural material artificial, and that therefore it would be most successful in fantasy and musicals and stylized productions.

According to inside authority, M.G.M. has spent about 300,000 dollars on *David Copperfield* (not yet in production) merely testing actors for the various parts. So far no one has been selected for David. It cost about 30,000 dollars to produce *Madchen in Uniform*.

"Time," the news magazine, is launching a new type of news-reel. As reported in the "Motion Picture Herald," the experimenters in charge have been working "on the theory that in the proper picturization of each news sequence there should be depicted: (1) the events leading up to the beginning; (2) the events that transpired between the beginning and the end, and (3) the end itself, all three parts to be built up dramatically at both the studio and on the actual scene of the incident." Thus stock shots and studio scenes will augment the actual news-reel event.

The idea sounds promising. But "Time" will not have to go far to surpass the Hollywood news-reel, what with its disregard of important events, and monotonous repetition of beauty parades and military manœuvres.

MACK W. SCHWAB.

GERMANY

THOUGH regimented under Nazi control the Ufa studios are not to be used for constructive propaganda in the manner of the Soviets, but are to produce pleasant narcotics intended, no doubt, to ease the pain of other measures of reform. The new theatrical programme, which sets out to "give the public what they want—namely a means of forgetting care and finding amusement," is headed by *Baron Neuhaus*, a musical comedy of the time of Maria Theresa, directed by Gustav Ucicky, who will also make *Barcarole*, with Offenbach's music. Dr. Arthur Robison, of *Warning Shadows* fame, is to make *The Secret of Woronzeff*, a society film of the Riviera and Paris, featuring Brigette Helm.

From a scenario by Thea von Harbou, Gerhard Lamprect is to direct *Turandot, Princess of China*, a lavish Oriental spectacle designed by Herlth and Rohrig, remembered for their work on *Faust* and *Tartuffe*; Wagner will photograph. A Strauss operetta, *The Gipsy Baron*, will be made by Karl Hartl. *Holidays from Myself* is a comedy of life in a Silesian sanatorium where every patient has to lay aside his "everyday I," adapted from a romance by the poet Paul Keller by Olaf Fjord.

But however far Ufa may have departed from its traditions in dramatic production, the new programme of the educational department promises a continuance of Neubabelsberg's interest in scientific achievement and fine workmanship. *In the Tracks of the Hansiatic League* is a survey of the Gothic architecture of the Hansiatic builders and a description of the League's influence on German civilization. Dr. Ulrich K. T. Schulz is directing a new series of films dealing with the life of meadow and forest. Two biological films, *Voices in the Reeds* and *Fowl for the Hunter*, show with the use of telephoto lenses the habits of timid wild game, and new secrets of the plant world are revealed in *The Speech of Plants* and *Orchids*. *Six-legged Builders* is announced (with evident pride) as showing the "state-like arrangements and organization of different kinds of German ants."

Dr. Martin Rikli has directed a number of films such as *The Infinite Cosmos*, dealing with astronomy, and *Whirlpools in Water*. These will be followed by *Motor Highways; Gorch Fock*, illustrating the training of naval cadets; and *F.P.I. Becomes a Reality*, a German Air-hansa film. Wilhelm Prager will make a number of films of German landscape and German life. Various language versions are being made of all these films.

NEW ABSTRACT PROCESS

Night on the Bare Mountain is the result of a year's experiment to achieve a new method of production related in some ways to the animated cartoon, though the relationship is one rather of contradiction than of similarity.

In cartoon production, one drawing is traced on the drawing which preceded it, and it is relatively easy to move the lines or surfaces with the necessary precision. The serious drawback lies in the impossibility of reproducing with precision in a series of drawings the grey tones or shadings in movement. In other words, the animated cartoon corresponds to a line drawing. And this drawing is rather summary because of the large number of pictures to be made.

Now Alexeieff has arrived at a means of creating a film, made by hand, but analogous to an engraving, containing all the finesses of tone and shading. The idea of filming a single picture, artificial and mobile, has existed for several years. Starting on this principle of a single picture being capable of indefinite modification, we have realized a process absolutely supple from all points of view and allowing the artist to put in film form everything the imagination can conceive.

At first it would seem easy to make a picture with charcoal, in oils, or with the aerograph, and to retouch it after taking each picture with a camera turned frame by frame; but none of the materials existing in painting, engraving or drawing would permit of retouches so numerous and so delicate as the film demands.

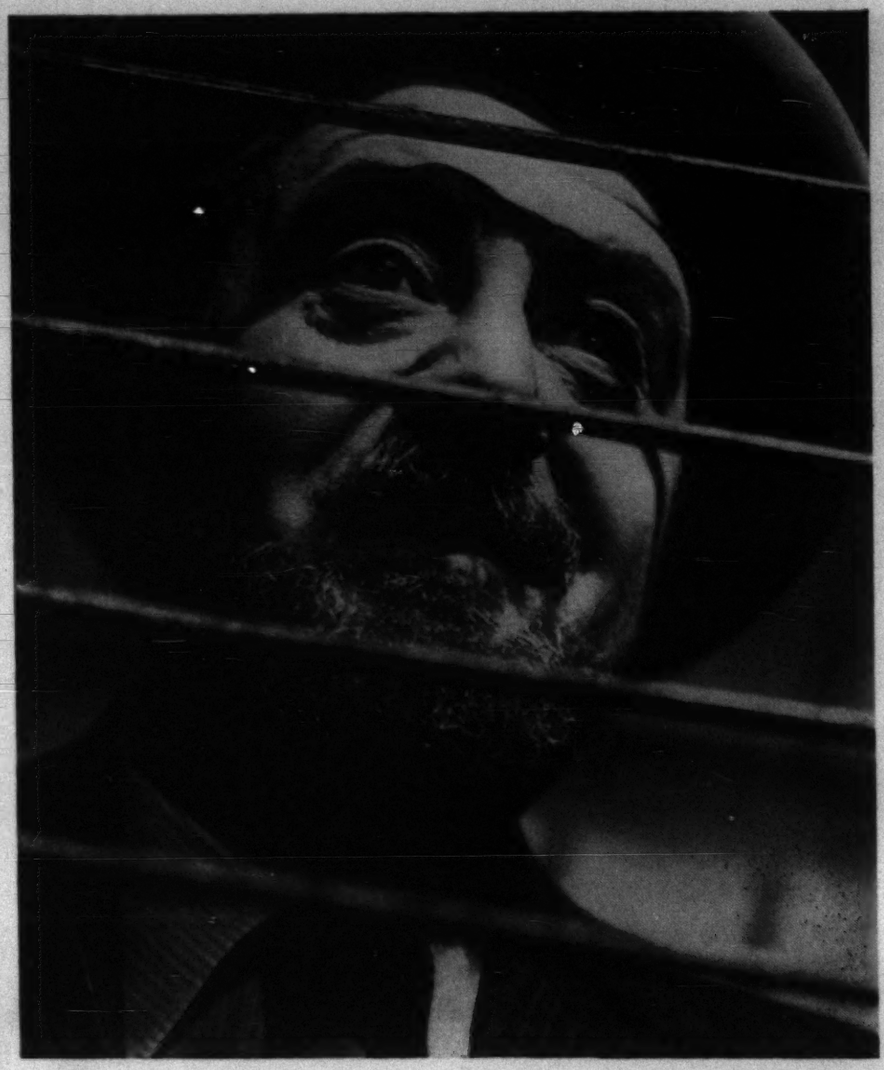
The invention of a material both sensitive and resistant, offering all the shades of grey, was the problem. This material we eventually found, and it is the basis of the process in question.

The picture is made on a screen of considerable dimensions, with the aid of this material which allows of all possible effects and surpasses in brilliancy and delicacy of tint everything that is known in engraving. The picture is then modified as the successive stages are photographed.

The scenario of *Night on the Bare Mountain* was based on the music of Mussorgsky recorded on a gramophone record. With the aid of a stop watch, the music was analysed and timed phrase by phrase to a fifth of a second. A study of the orchestra score enabled us to perfect this exactitude to a twenty-fourth of a second. Thus the pictorial and musical compositions are intimately bound together and the visual image derives its form and evolution from that of the music.

CLAIRE PARKER, A. ALEXEIEFF.

From René Clair's new film, "Le Dernier Milliardaire," to be included in the present Academy season. Raymond Cordy, Max Dearly and Marcel Carpentier are in the cast.



Raimu in "Ces Messieurs de la Santé," a satirical French comedy directed by Pierre Colombier.
(Courtesy of Academy, London).

Conrad Veidt and Paul Graetz in "Jew Süss" (Gaumont-British), directed by Lothar Mendes. Photography: Bernard Knowles.

BRUCE WOOLFE, ROTHA, AND "RISING TIDE"

THIS is Paul Rotha's second documentary under Bruce Woolfe, and Gaumont-British have publicly announced that it marks their entry into the field of documentary. Fine. Like *Contact*, *Rising Tide* is a three reeler—a size which, in documentary, requires both ambition of idea and solidity of design. One can wander discursively or descriptively over one reel, or a reel and a half. Thereafter it is the theme that counts. Rotha knows this. *Contact* has the theme that air transport brings the nations closer together. *Rising Ride* has the theme that great construction plans (in this case the building of a Southampton Dock) are intimately related to the economic life of the country.

This is a fine theme, but of course a dangerous one, because it goes to the heart of economics. It means that if the film is to be dramatically or humanly true, the development of the theme must be economically true. And the whole idea is too near to our common concern to allow of rhetorical or other superficial solution. Here, if anywhere, cinema has to be right, as well as good looking, to justify itself.

The film describes lines of unemployed, and very dramatically, to introduce the problem. It sets about the building of the dock, and describes it in really terrific photography. It opens the sluices, and fills the basin. It brings in the ship. But what then? Magically, and without explanation, somehow, just somehow, by no more than a temporal juxtaposition of sequence, the world is set to work again. The cotton factories whirl—and very magnificently—the steel workers in rhythmic splendour fill their furnaces. Much photography indeed, but no economics. By what extra efficiency in Southampton, of all places, Lancashire commands new markets, by what process of rationalization the dole line decreases, is not explained. "Life follows art," said Oscar Wilde. Yes, but it only does so if it is true art going to the heart of things and revealing their growing point. *Rising Tide* will not pass muster, and Rotha knows it won't. But see his relation to the business. Some of the material he fell heir to, and the idea was given him already half digested. He was, in other words, not his own master in the formulation of the problem, and all he could really bring to it was his eye for pic-

tures, and his power of tempoed sequence. These virtues may demonstrate a great talent. They do not make a film. It is the old story of the wood and the trees. In *Rising Tide* Rotha is a master of foliage.

The whole business so demonstrates the essential problem of production, and so reveals the mistaken relationship which may exist between producer and director that a friendly critic may be permitted to analyse the case still further. If this producer-director relationship is to be fruitful, there is one matter on which the two partners must be agreed—and that is on the theme. On the details of photography, cutting and sound, they may fight as much as they please, for they do not finally matter. The theme does. It must be agreed together, believed in together, slaved at in common, from the inception of the film until its completion.

It is not for the producer to dictate a theme in which the director cannot follow him. That way lies every disaster of production. The directors 'best' deteriorates inevitably into a demonstration of virtuosity. What was meant to be important, for the lack of conviction that goes with it, comes to pretence and disappointment. The director indeed (though he probably needs the money) lends his reputation to an impossible task.

Nor is it for the director to dictate the theme to the producer. The producer has his own responsibilities: it may be to finance, or to doctrine, or to art itself. But though his intentions for a film are thus defined, it is to his interest that the director, as the interpreter of his hopes, should see eye to eye with him. That way he uses another talent and inspiration to complement his own.

The solution is really a simple one. Find the theme on which there is absolute unqualified agreement and shoot to it. It may not be the biggest or the deepest possible theme, it may not be what each separately considers the best theme, but let it be a theme commonly agreed: one indeed in which they can join their energies. Bruce Woolfe and Rotha might consider this. Rotha has a talent well worth exploiting and there is much they might develop together. They cannot afford to be out of step, as would seem to be the case in *Rising Tide*.

The remainder of the criticism is more personal to Rotha. He is still a silent director. His eye seems to be still exclusively glued to visual design and the pleasing passage of images across the screen. He adds sound but he does not seem yet to think sound. This is wrong of him, for sound, with its many human perspectives, has more to give him than almost any other documentary director. It will warm his sequence and intensify his reference. It will save him from the self-consciousness of his photographic style. Atmospheric music and rhythmic beat are not enough. Sound too must be narrative.

JOHN GRIERSON.

FILMS OF THE QUARTER

DEVELOPING SOUND

FORSYTH HARDY

A NEW consciousness of sound as a means of enriching the expressiveness of the film is the most interesting development of a quarter singularly unproductive of notable pictures. Ever since Jolson broke the sacred silence, of course, there has been a realization, in theory, that sound ought to have more than a merely naturalistic purpose in cinema; and a few experimentalists have made fleeting attempts to do unconventional things with the sound-strip. There is no need to detail again the experiments of Clair, Hitchcock, Lubitsch and the others. Their isolated outbursts of imaginative experimentation with sound have already been analysed with so much reverence that they are almost elevated into a doctrine, instead of being accepted as haphazard gropings towards the light. The limit in the expressive use of sound was not reached with Clair's cine-opera or the soliloquy before the shaving mirror in *Murder*. These and such other celebrated experiments as the choral accompaniment to the unemployment sequence in *Three Cornered Moon* and the police-car call prologue to *Beast of the City* ought to have been regarded as minor discoveries in an unknown land. But instead of being the starting points for further exploration, they have been too often estimated as final achievements—devices to be copied perhaps, but not ideas to be understood and developed. Thus there has been no general march forward: the pioneers have faltered and for the most part fallen back. The result is that we are not now much nearer to a fully expressive use of sound than we were in the days of *The Great Gabbo*. We have made sound more distinct, but not more dramatic.

There has been some evidence this quarter however, of a change in attitude. Grierson and Cavalcanti at the G.P.O. have been making a series of experiments in the art and practice of sound-which are in advance of anything yet attempted and which have a real significance for the development of film. The tentative departures from convention in *6.30 Collection* and *Cable Ship*, which Grierson has already described in these pages, have been followed by more exciting developments in *Granton Trawler* and *Weather Forecast*, while *Pett and Pott* represents a complete departure from the traditional form of the talking picture and the emergence of a sound film with an aural expressiveness related to, but not merely dependant on, the

visuals. Grierson himself describes this and his other new sound-films as the first sods cut in a new country. He wishes them to be assessed only as beginnings. Yet *Pett and Pott* in its three reels contains more effective achievement in the expressive use of sound than there was in the collected work of all the previous experimentalists. Grierson and Cavalcanti have not shut their eyes to previous developments and there is for example, a comic sequence in a suburb-bound tube with a five-part chorus as commentary which is reminiscent of the methods of Clair; but we do not have a mere disguised excerpt from *Le Million* but an idea greatly elaborated and playing its inter-related part with other new ideas in the sequence. This as with the other experiments of the film, is not a haphazard interlopation but part of a co-ordinated sound accompaniment that runs on, now providing a background comment for the scene, now coming forward to dominate the visuals, and always making the film more expressive than it would have been with natural sound. I shall not attempt here to work out the significance of all that Grierson and Cavalcanti achieve in *Pett and Pott*; that is best left to the producers themselves. But it is important to record that a sizeable pebble has been dropped into the pool of complacency over the problems of sound and that the ripples will inevitably spread far and wide.

Walt Disney has for long been accepted as one of the major figures of the sound cinema. Rotha, writing in "The Film Till Now," considered that "the essential characteristics of the Disney cartoon films, where distorted linear images are matched with equally distorted sound images, are those of the visual sound-film of the future." For a time certainly, it seemed that Disney was working out the principles of a sound-film which, eschewing naturalism, would use sound images in counterpoint to increase the expressiveness of the film and supply through the sound-strip a comic commentary for the movement of the cartoon. But this line of development has not been followed out in his cartoons; many of the early experiments with distorted sound were given up and Disney was apparently satisfied to concentrate on draughtsmanship. Possibly the immense popularity of his work made experiment more difficult. Colour has for the past year been absorbing his attention—for which development we are deeply grateful—and the quarter's colour Silly Symphonies, *The Wise Old Hen*, *The Flying Mouse* and *Peculiar Penguins*, are as fine as anything he has done. But the most exciting cartoon of the quarter is undoubtedly *Orphan's Benefit* which seems to indicate that Disney has begun to think again in terms of sound. The comic high-lights of the cartoon do not occur in its draughtsmanship; they are pure sound jokes. A burly Buff Orpington who appears as an opera star at Mickey's concert, has not a prosaic

From "Night on The Bare Mountain" produced by a new method, giving the impression of an animated engraving, invented by Alexeieff. To be shown shortly by the Film Society, London.

Nova Pilbeam in "Little Friend" (Gaumont-British), directed by Berthold Viertel. Photography: Gunthur Krampf.

human voice but clucks, cackles and screeches in deliciously distorted imitation of a palpitating prima donna. The unexpectedness of the sounds produces an instantaneous response in laughter. Sound is used with a similar comic effectiveness in the attempts of a duck to recite "Little Boy Blue." The fact that Disney is a comic artist does not necessarily mean that his work is without significance; and an analysis of his comic uses of sound does not preclude us from honest enjoyment of the fun.

Experiment with sound has not yet spread generally to the commercial cinema, though it is not too much to suggest that *Pett and Pott* will in time initiate a new approach altogether to the studio film. Meanwhile there has been a sudden outburst of song in the cinema. The crooner has been ousted by the opera star and the air is filled with Wagnerian melodies. Snippets of opera in sentimental stories, of course, must not be mistaken for the real thing and it would be wrong to deduce from the popularity of *Blossom Time* and *One Night of Love* that the British are a nation of opera lovers. Yet the new vogue for musical films has not come without considerable public demand and we may assume that this demonstrated desire for something more than jazz and crooning does indicate an advance in musical appreciation. For the most part the new operatic films conform to a conventional pattern and there is little attempt to use music and song dramatically from a filmic point of view. Exceptions are a scene towards the close of *Evensong:* Irela is resentfully realizing that her career as a singer is over while the voice of the new favourite runs on throughout the scene in a sort of commentative chorus of exultation; and another in *One Night of Love* when the young American student sings from the window of a Milanese garret and gradually all of the musicians in the studios within earshot adapt their playing to her song. But generally the new musical films are content to use the microphone conventionally to record straightforwardly the voice of the chosen operatic star. In addition, we have had Jan Kiepura in *My Song for You* and Joseph Schmidt in *My Song Goes Round the World.*

Foreign films of the quarter have been comparatively few. The Curzon opened its season with *The Slump is Over;* the Academy with *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse,* which Rotha reviews elsewhere. An interesting list of forthcoming attractions includes the new Clair picture, *Le Dernier Milliardiare,* a Swedish comedy, *Pettersen and Bendel* and Jacques Feyder's *Pension Mimosa.* There are vague forecasts of new Russian films including *Three Songs of Lenin* by Dziga-Vertov and *The Great Consoler* by Kuleshov, and the Film Society promises strange importations from Turkey (*Aysel, Fille de Montagne*) and Poland (*Chalutzim*). If the promises are fulfilled, it ought to be an exciting Continental season.

JEW SÜSS

Production: Gaumont-British. Script: Rawlinson. Direction: Lothar Mendes. Photography: Bernard Knowles. Sets: Alfred Junge. Editing: Otto Ludwig. Length: 9,740 feet. Distribution: G.-B. Distributors. With Conrad Veidt, Frank Vosper, Benita Hume, Cedric Hardwicke, Paul Graetz, Gerald du Maurier.

NINE years ago Feuchtwanger ushered in a new era of historical fiction by writing what is to some minds the greatest historical novel of all time. *Jew Süss* the film might have ended an era of costume pictures by in turn being the biggest effort of its kind. Instead it continues the vogue for which Korda must be given the credit of starting. But because of what *Süss* might have meant for cinema in general and British films in particular, because of the wide-spread discussion it must provoke, and because in some ways it is a very ambitious endeavour, it deserves greater space than the other historical pictures of the year.

With his magnificent opening chapter, Feuchtwanger set the scale for his whole story of the Jew. We were conscious at once of the wide horizons of the eighteenth century, of the bustle and life and intrigue within these limits of Würtemberg. Everything that followed, the craft, the guile, the whoring, the praying, the intriguing, the private struggles and public issues fell into place on this vast canvas. Everything had significance within the boundaries of the epoch. Therein lay the greatness of the author's approach. It is precisely this vision, this magnitude of mind, that the film does not possess.

The book has been well pilfered. All the plums are here, all the bombastic moments, all the bloody minutes, all the natty spectacle and all the shining pomp. On the surface it spreads a grand array. Men talk of doing this and doing that, but never do we see them doing it. Süss declares his lust for power, becomes the Duke's prop, is the indispensable and hated Jew, but why and how he contrives these things is a mystery. Never are we taken beneath the gilded scene, never are the real issues behind Süss's behaviour or the economic motives underlying the political intrigue revealed. Here is no cross-section of the eighteenth century which might have been such grand material for movie. The film is founded on the superficial appearance of men and things, an approach that has never and can never achieve the level of greatness.

This is no destructive broadside. The film is too big for that, big enough to stand criticism. Big in money. So big that all the

furniture, the costumes, the jewels, the nick-nacks and baubles might well have been ticketed with their hire price. I remember some publicity about the countless dozen tulips for Süss's garden, real tulips. But, alas, they mean little on the screen. They are overdone. It is all overdone. Except taste, which is absent. There is nothing of the finer qualities of observation and selection, of the instinctive feeling for what is right and what is wrong. There is no modulation or balance. That is a director's job and that, I think, is where Mendes fails to qualify for the task. Why, I wonder, was Mendes chosen to make this film? His previous record shows *The Four Feathers*, *Love Makes Us Blind* and *Dangerous Curves*—all probably estimable pictures of their kind, but that kind was not *Süss*. Small wonder, then, at the opportunities missed. The climax, for example. Why ignore Feuchtwanger's special emphasis on the iron cage and its history, when it offered such dynamic reference to the hanging?

Veidt we have watched since Cesare in *Caligari*. A parade of Borgia, Nelson, Ivan, Baldwin, Orlac, Louis XI, Gwynplaine, Rasputin and Jew. They are all here. The demoniacal laugh, the furrowed brows, the straying locks of hair. He shares with Garbo a physique rich in photogenique meaning. But since he has lost touch with significant direction, he has given way more and more to mannerisms. Some call this great acting. It is powerful but I doubt if it is great. With the exception of Hardwicke, most of the others overact, with Vosper's Karl Alexander the worst offence. Scarcely any can wear their clothes save the dignified du Maurier, who alone of the company appears to know how to manage his sword when he sits down. But the part of Weissensee, important in the book, is so clipped that from the anxious expression on his face, Sir Gerald must have been bewildered at his own presence. The sets are lavish; but then Jünge can do this sort of thing standing on his head. Did he not design hunting-lodges for Franz Joseph?

What then is the result? I do not believe that anyone will ever make better if as good historical films than did the Germans in their heyday. *Federicus Rex*, *Dubarry* and *Manon Lescaut*. They gave everything (save fantasy) that cinema has to give in their attempt to bring alive the past. And they achieved nothing better than museum value. When shall we realize that the camera belongs to the present, that its concern is actuality not artificiality? The newsreel of the Marseilles assassination shown in this same programme proves this better than my theory. Its chance rendering of a living (and dying) moment transfixed the audience. What chance had the mere hundred thousand odd pounds of *Süss* against reality?

PAUL ROTHA.

NELL GWYN

Production: British and Dominions. Direction: Herbert Wilcox. Photography: Fred Young. Art Direction: L. P. Williams. Distribution: United Artists. With Anna Neagle, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Esmé Percy. Length: 7,719 feet.

DESPITE its origins which, rightly or wrongly, we have hitherto regarded with suspicion, this is one of the more sizeable films of the quarter. The co-operation between the production staff which gave a special interest to *The Queen's Affair* is here more prominently in evidence. Wilcox, by some strange genius, seems to have made a harmonious team out of his production staff and the result is a well-knit job which makes no concessions to either kind of brow and is a good honest film.

The story, though by choice revealing only a small facet of history, neither perverts nor unduly "musicalizes" the facts of history. Hardwicke gives an exceptionally fine performance, investing the part of Charles II with all the vacillations and strange twists of character which were a part of that monarch, yet retaining a certain dignity which the film commendably lives up to. Anna Neagle, despite a certain harrying of the part of Nell, never achieves anything notable. She lacks the divine fire and we are only too conscious of a hard-working actress doing her best. But even although her performance is only adequate, the film does not suffer unduly as Wilcox has shrewdly arranged that it does not depend merely on stars for success. That is an unusual achievement for a factory-made film.

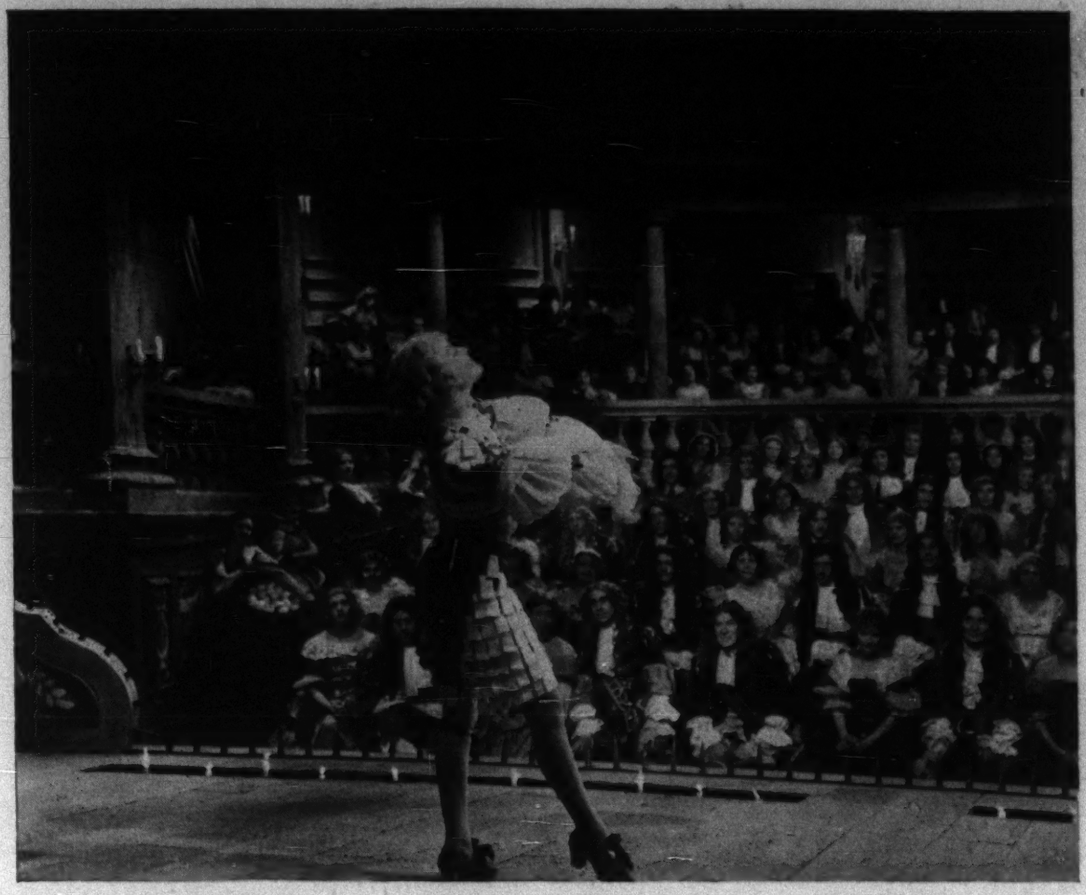
In the titles, credit is given to Charles II, Nell Gwyn and Samuel Pepys for the dialogue; and Miles Malleson has selected, arranged and augmented this admirably, so that while it is on occasion colloquial, it is never cheap. It is the finest we have had in any historical film in this country. We can forgive Wilcox everything in his film past for this production which marks, for this country, an entirely new standard of co-operation between the technicians.

D. F. TAYLOR.

ATALANTE

Direction: Jean Vigo. Production: Gaumont-France.

Barge stories are bad luck in cinema, or so they say. There is association of slow tempo and dirty water, and drab pedestrian happenings on water fronts. A bargee, like any other slum dweller, lives in confined surroundings without horizon of storm or distance. Vigo's film is beautiful because it makes its story out of these very elements. A peasant girl marries a barge skipper; the barge sets off on a long tramp to Paris. The girl is excited at the notion of Paris and makes dreams of it; the skipper, like a good bargee,



From "Nell Gwyn," a British and Dominions film directed by Herbert Wilcox, with Anna Neagle and Cedric Hardwicke. Photography: Fred Young.

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knows better. They go ashore. The girl becomes still more excited. They quarrel and separate, and the barge goes on. Realism wins, and they come together again.

It is all very simple but true. The only possible criticism is that Vigo makes the coming together more sentimental than it need have been. The girl wanders overmuch on desolate bridges looking for the "Atalante," when any good proletarian would have had the sense to use the police. The issue would not have appeared any less desperate.

The chief thing about the film is the quality of Vigo as a director. He tells the right story; he tells it in a style peculiar to himself. It is an exciting style. At the base of it is a sense of documentary realism which makes the barge a real barge—so exact in its topography that one could find one's way on it blindfold and dead drunk on a windy night. This is important in barges as in all ships, and sea films never seem to realize it. But on top of the realism is a crazy Vigo world of symbols and images. The mate forward has his cabin stuffed with bric-a-brac from junk shops and from deep sea voyages. He too, more monstrously, represents romance: with shells, sword fish, pictures of harlots, musical boxes, and the pickled hands of a departed shipmate. He is tattooed—as he proudly demonstrates to the eager skipperess—to the nines. The trip ashore is similarly rendered. Here romance is not described but imaged in the crazy antics of a *colporteur* or ribbon man, who cycles down high hills, is a first rate sleight of hand merchant, and, for no reason at all, appears occasionally with a one man band. It is a novel and fascinating way of story-telling, and Vigo is clearly one of the most imaginative young directors in Europe.

JOHN GRIERSON.

DR MABUSE

Production: Nerofilm. Script: Thea van Harbou. Direction: Fritz Lang. Photography: Fritz Arno Wagner. Sets: Karl Volbrecht. Distribution: A. Fried. With Gustav Diessl, Rudolph Klein-Rogge, Otto Wernicke, Oscar Beregi, Vera Liessem, Camilla Spira. Length: 10,620 feet.

This is the last film made by Fritz Lang in Germany, produced by Nebenzahl's Nero company which sponsored *Kameradschaft*, *Ariane*, *M.* and *Atlantide*. Much celluloid has been spoiled since the original crazy exploits of the hypnotist Mabuse were shown in part form in England but even now, in days of sound, Lang remains unchanged. Perhaps the literary use of noise assists the building of the suspense of which he is so fond, as in the opening of this picture; probably the American gang films have loaned an idea or two, as in the car murder; but the formula remains essentially the same. Incredible robberies, the unseen master-criminal, the sub-sect-

ion B and the murder squad, street corner bombing and houses that flood and unflood at will—these are the authentic Lang materials by way of Thea von Harbou from the Magnet Library. Here are all the old vices and not so many of the virtues. The story is atrocious drivel, the reasoning does not bear inspection, human psychology is totally missing; but the detail is elaborately contrived and some of the situations ingenious and it is all well staged in the good old German style. There is the usual capable playing by Gustav Diessl, Klein-Rogge and Otto Wernicke, reminding us how capable is this school of German acting. What a pity that Lang is so superficial! You feel he has a flair for sensational incident and a knowledge of melodrama which might be useful in cinema if only he had some foundation on which to base his work. Imagine, for instance, a Lang film of the burning of the Reichstag. There is nobody who could handle better the nefarious plot and counterplot, the elaborate scheming that preceded the crime, the precautions undertaken, the drama of the event itself and the floodgates of murder that it opened. It is all astonishing melodrama surpassing anything that Lang or his Mabuse could conceive. But the subsequent trial would need a greater mind than Lang's, a Pabst or a Pudovkin, to bring satire to the tragi-comedy of its chain of self-exposures.

PAUL ROTHA.

CRIME WITHOUT PASSION

Production, Direction and Script: Charles MacArthur-Ben Hecht. Associate Direction and Photography: Lee Garmes. Sets: Albert Johnson. Distribution: Paramount. With Claude Rains, Margo, Whitney Bourne, Stanley Ridges. Length: 6,080 feet.

We may be excused for paying more than ordinary attention to this very entertaining melodrama, for it not only marks a new departure in production methods of studio films but presents the Hecht-MacArthur writing team in the new role of producer-writers in an attempt, they tell us, to prove that good pictures can be made with a maximum of intelligence in a minimum of time and expense. This is the first of four pictures commissioned for a Paramount release but shot without Hollywood supervision in the Long Island studios at New York with the technical aid of Lee Garmes, erstwhile ace-photographer of *Zoo in Budapest* and *Shanghai Express* among others. There is nothing especially fresh in this story of a famous criminal lawyer who believes he commits a crime and is ultimately exposed by the skill with which he disguises the murder. It is the familiar mouthpiece story told backwards, with the trial at the beginning instead of at the curtain. But there is something fresh in the treatment applied with its endless succession of original twists, and intelligent dialogue. With the exception of Rains, the

cast plays like human beings instead of actors, maintaining an unnaturally low key, thereby giving emphasis to situations which otherwise would fall into the ordinary rut of melodrama. This particularly applies to Margo, night-club dancer fresh to the screen, who brings here a curiously attractive personality far removed from the orthodox star's prescription. Whitney Bourne, Manhattan socialite, is not so successful, obviously playing to Hollywood precedent. To Garmes, I think, must go credit for most of the direction and also, I am afraid, the self-conscious artiness which now and again crops up to destroy the realism of the treatment. Left alone, these ace-cameramen always seem destined to run amok with arty-impressionism, in this case a double-exposure trick of the lawyer's second self to goad him into false security. It is odd that a man of Garmes's ability should not have realized that sound alone gave all he wanted for this second self gag without throwing back to the crude old ideas of the Germans. Apart from this criticism and the doubtful wisdom of allowing Rains to overact, the film is certainly to be noted as an advance in independent methods and augurs well for coming films from the same team.

PAUL ROTHA.

LITTLE FRIEND

Production and Distribution: Gaumont-British. Direction: Berthold Viertel Script: Margaret Kennedy. Photography: Gunthur Krampf. Sets: Alfred Jünge. Editing: Ian Dalrymple, With Matheson Lang, Lydia Sherwood, Nova Pilbeam, Fritz Körtner. Length; 7,650 feet.

There is a solid honesty behind this film which, despite its many shortcomings, I commend to your notice. True, it is doubtful if it would have been produced without the previous examples of *Poil de Carotte* and *La Maternelle*, but this we must accept as part and parcel of the picture business. Of one thing we may be certain, that Viertel believed in his story and was sincere in his direction. His undoing lies in the mistake that Nova Pilbeam is neither mentally nor physically suited to the part she is called upon to fulfil and that his handling of the story is foreign to the essentially English atmosphere that pervades the whole. You can see how successfully he worked with Krampf, Körtner and Jünge because they understood his requirements. But the only member of the remainder who shows comprehension of his aims is Lydia Sherwood, whose sound acting ability stands her in good stead in an underestimated performance of the unhappy mother. For the rest, they are dull and wooden, giving poor Viertel little help and speaking their badly-written lines without feeling or interest. If the treatment generally had been more cinematic, this might not have been so obvious, but

Viertel stays close to the theatrical tradition and scarcely ever dares to embrace the film medium for what it could give him. The interiors are beautifully lit and have that grace of style which we associate with Jünge but the exterior Park scenes are feeble in the extreme. But, and this is the point, it marks a breakaway for Gaumont-British into more worthwhile subjects and for that deserves our recognition.

PAUL ROTHA.

LOT IN SODOM

Production, direction and photography: Sibley Watson, Jr., and Melville Webber. Music: Louis Seigel. Length: 2,234 feet.

SURREALISM apart, we know that the film can be more than a mere mirror of reality, or the dramatic simulation of reality. Word strewn epics, symphonies, the sterner stuff of documentary, and even the simple lyric, we are familiar with. But cinema has still other *genres* to develop. It has still the higher reaches of Parnassus to assail. Watson and Webber in their interpretation of the Bible episode of Lot's travail in the city of perversion have had this in mind, and if their film is no more than a self-conscious preening of feathers before spreading the wings for flight, it must be welcomed as an attempt at experiment, even though we deplore the choice of theme and the decadent artiness of its treatment.

To anyone unfamiliar with the Old Testament narrative the film is barely explicit. But that is no concern of poetry. The beauty of its visuals, integrated with Louis Seigel's Hebraic orchestration of sound reflecting mood and intensifying atmosphere, appeals purely to the senses. Distorting mirror and prism are creaky mechanics with which to reach the higher flights, but even so there is achieved a sort of white fire of passion—as in Lot's description of woman's labour—alternating with a cold, harrowing sensuality, whipped up by flute and harp and laid low again by the morose chanting of Hebrew voices. As an achievement in film poetics *Lot in Sodom* is scarcely a milestone, but it is at least a signpost to a road which independent producers might profitably explore.

NORMAN WILSON.

THE SLUMP IS OVER. (*French. Nero Film. Made at Joinville.*)

THE spiritual father of this film is *Le Chemin du Paradis* which some of you may remember with affection. Given as good songs, this film would be as great a success at the box-office. There is a cheerful air of spontaneity about the whole production, which is not to be compared with the mechanical gaieties of René Clair. The story is about a shoe-stringing theatrical company and from the appearance of the film, I should imagine it too, was produced on a shoe-string. The cheerful atmosphere of this kind of production, the happy co-

operative spirit it breeds, has been caught in the story and in the acting. There is an agreeable freshness about the film and though it has not removed my mind from *la crise*, it at least succeeded in doing so for ninety minutes. The sound is indifferent and the print worse but the gaiety shines through. There are none of the arty effects of Clair, nothing is carefully timed to get the maximum effect, yet the very honesty of its fun is infectious. The director is Robert Siodmak, maker of *Menschen am Sonntag* and subsequently with Ufa.

D. F. T.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF DON JUAN (*British. London Films*). Stylistically, this film is what we have come to expect from London Films but it has no other points to commend it except style. It is said that Korda has brought to the screen a sophistication which British pictures have hitherto lacked; but it is the sophistication bred in the Mayfair drawing-rooms of Evelyn Waugh. His other screen accomplishment is a pleasant, if somewhat exact, sense of pictorial composition, accompanied by efficient art direction. But when, as here, he has no Laughton or Bergner to depend on, the film appears threadbare. Douglas Fairbanks with all his graces—and they are many—is not an actor. He is given a part which not only is he incapable of handling but which patently suggests his own swan song (an unfortunate association of ideas for the box-office). The film has a generous gallery of attractive women and Binnie Barnes gets some rousing life into a broad sketch of a barmaid. One or two small parts are noticeably well done, particularly the major-domo. The major-domo has long been a stand-by in British films. D.F.T.

NIGHT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN (*French. Film Society*). This short film introduces a new method of animation, the particulars of which are the secret of the inventor, Alexeieff. The general effect is of animated engraving. There is a soft shadowy quality in the form, and none of the hard precision of line associated with cartoons. The forms emerge from space, they have the appearance of dissolving to other forms. Three dimensional qualities seem to be easily achieved, and models in animation can be introduced without disturbing the general style. The film, apart from its technical interest, is an imaginative performance, though difficult to describe. Imagine however, a *Walpurgis Nacht*, in which animated footsteps indicate spirit presences, goblins and hob-goblins appear and disappear and tumble fantastically, scarecrows do a fandango with their shadows on empty hillsides, white horses and black tear across high heaven and skeletons walk. The animation is to the music of Mussorgsky. All film societies should see this film. It is as astonishing and as brilliant a short as they are likely to find. J.G.

TREASURE ISLAND (*American. M.G.M.*). As we might have anticipated from the film's origin, Stevenson's story has been transformed, if carefully, to provide a starring vehicle for Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper, late of *The Champ*. This Hollywoodian Long John Silver and Jim Hawkins have a stronger personal attachment than Stevenson depicted and the film makes him connive at Silver's escape and suggest in the end that they may one day return to the island for the remainder of the treasure. Jackie Cooper is not equal to the complexities of Jim's character but his performance has the merit of stolid consistency. Beery as Silver is almost all of the film. Stevenson might not have immediately recognized this smooth, smiling villain with a merciless streak craftily concealed, but he would have loved him. Faithfulness to R. L. S. apart, the film is, until the maudlin final scene comes, a lively record of swashbuckling adventure, broad in its sweep (Victor Fleming of *The Virginian* directed), exciting in its photography and, curiously, distinguished by a more stirring sense of British patriotism than most of our own films. F.H.

CES MESSIEURS DE LA SANTÉ (*French. Film Society*). Engendered doubtless, by the Stavisky scandal, this satirical comedy of high finance is amusing and well made. Its satire is not cinematic, but lies in the script and acting. Raimu who plays the part of a financier who builds a moribund corset shop into a modern finance corporation, carries the film on his skilful shoulders. Pierre Colombier's direction holds the balance neatly between fantasy and comedy. Skilful and successful rather than brilliant and inspiring.

DAWN TO DAWN (*American. Cameron Macpherson*). A moving little pastoral film which relates in sombre but not depressing terms the story of a jealous invalid father, his repressed and work-laden daughter and a young man who wanders by chance into her life and out again—a short story whose length (3,000 feet) is exactly appropriate to its theme. The sincere direction of Josef Berne, the imaginative photography of Paul Ivano and the finely economical dialogue give the film distinction. Julie Hayden is the girl, Ole M. Ness the father and Frank Eklof the youth.

BLOSSOM TIME (*British. B.I.P.*). This lyrical romance of the music of Franz Schubert, with Richard Tauber as the composer, is the finest film that has come from B.I.P. for years. Under Paul Stein's direction, Tauber has lost the fussy affectation which spoilt his previous screen appearances; he sings superbly Schubert's more popular compositions and his impersonation of the composer as a naïve and forlorn figure has considerable emotional appeal. Skilfully the film is filled with music—orchestra, choral and solo singing. Photography is finely in mood and there is a lovely sequence of schoolboys singing in a meadow.

LITTLE MAN, WHAT NOW? (*American. Universal*). This adaptation of Hans Fallalda's novel is faithful as far as it goes. Inevitably it omits the deeper intimacies of the original and unfortunately it leaves out also some of the sterner qualities from the character of the husband which made more comprehensible his young wife's unfaltering devotion. The emphasis of the film is more idyllic than economic: Frank Borzage is still in his Seventh Heaven. The story is told with extreme simplicity and sincerity and if it is emotionally a little strenuous the natural acting of Margaret Sullavan and Douglass Montgomery keeps it clear of sentiment.

FILM SOCIETIES

Of its own volition, without any organized plans for expansion, the film societies movement is growing rapidly throughout the country. The formation of several new societies in important centres is recorded in our notes, and preliminary negotiations are in progress prior to the setting up of similar bodies in other districts. An important development is the tendency of societies to co-operate even more closely than formerly with the trade. Northwich Film Society, following the practice of Billingham, is now holding its performances in a local cinema in the course of the ordinary weekly programme instead of in its own hall. In a small town where competition in the supply of entertainment is likely to cause bitterness this is a wise course to follow, so long as the society reserves the right to exhibit privately films which, because of the nature of their appeal, are not suitable for general audiences. In any case it is a move to induce and support the public exhibition of worthwhile pictures and is therefore to be welcomed. In ditricts where it is impossible to obtain permission to hold private performances this method of exhibition is certainly preferable to simply doing nothing.

In still smaller centres, or in towns where a serious interest in the cinema is not sufficiently developed to justify the formation of an exhibiting society, it has been suggested that " film circles " should be formed. Wherever there are a few cinema enthusiasts they should get together if only for the benefits to be derived from friendly discussion and organized study. But if they are true enthusiasts they will have something of the preacher's zeal and will soon convert others to their way of thinking. Thus the modest little circles will grow and in time will become the nucleus of more important organizations. How can such circles be formed and how would they function? A letter to the local press, or an advertisement, which should make it clear that the proposed circle is not a star " fan " club, will quickly bring together those who are interested in the idea. Then by means of combined study, discussion, lectures, etc., a fuller understanding of cinema will develop. The local cinema may be prevailed upon to book certain films in which members are specially interested, in return for which the circle can arrange to organize public support for the picture, and for its members and friends the circle can give occasional performances on sub-standard apparatus. The smaller towns, and even the villages, need not look with envy at the large cities with their apparently greater opportunities for securing worthwhile films. The formation of film circles may be the first step to securing similar facilities.

Cinema Quarterly will be glad to assist any one desirous of forming such a circle and will willingly supply whatever information may be required regarding films, the organizing of shows, apparatus or lectures. We shall also be pleased to publish the address of anyone wishing to get in touch with other readers with a view to forming a circle.

THE FILM SOCIETY, 56 Manchester Street, London, W.1. The tenth season will consist of eight performances at the Tivoli on Sunday afternoons. Students of universities and other institutions, as well as film technicians with a salary not exceeding £10 per week, are eligible for membership at a reduced subscription of 15s. The ordinary rates of subscription are 66s., 45s., and 26s. 6d. The final selection of films for the season is not yet available, but there are many interesting prospects including, Vigo's *Zero de Conduite*, *Atalante*, Dziga-Vertov's *Three Songs of Lenin*, Kuleshov's *The Great Consoler* and Basse's *So lebt ein Volk*.

ABERDEEN FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., Stephen Mitchell, 15 Golden Square The first season of this new society will consist of five performances to be given in The Picture House on Sunday afternoons. Lectures will also be arranged. A low subscription of 10s. is intended to secure a large membership. The first performance on November 18 will include *Leibelei*.

BILLINGHAM FILM SOCIETY, 3 Cambridge Terrace, Norton-on-Tees. There is no formal membership of this society, which enters upon its fifth season with a credit balance of £84. Anyone may come to its Wednesday twice nightly performances, which are sometimes attended by over 1,000. Oct. 10, Reiniger's *Carmen*, Elton's *Under the City*, Disney Cartoon, *Poil de Carotte*.

BIRMINGHAM FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., B. S. Page, 21 Carpenter Road. The fourth season will consist of seven Sunday afternoon performances at a subscription of 10s. 6d. First performance, Oct. 21, *Don Quixote*, *Industrial Britain*, *Canal Barge*, Disney's *Noah's Ark*.

CROYDON FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec. G. R. Bailey, 51 High Street. Subscription, 15s. for six Sunday afternoon performances in the Davis Theatre. Paul Rotha and R. C. Sherriff were guests at a luncheon given on Oct. 21, prior to the first performances which consisted of *The Floorwalker*, *The Bridge*, *In der Nacht*, and *Ces Messieurs de la Santé*.

EDINBURGH FILM GUILD, 17 St. Andrew Street. In order to widen the influence of the Guild the subscription has been reduced from a guinea to 12s. 6d. The first performance on October 28 will consist of *Charlemagne*, *Pett and Pott*, *Weather Forecast* and *Spring on the Farm*. Lecturers in a course on the Theory and Technique of the Film will include Andrew Buchanan, John Grierson, Alberto Cavalcanti and John Taylor.

FILM SOCIETY OF GLASGOW. Hon. Sec. D. Paterson Walker, 127 St. Vincent Street, sixth season. Subscription 12s. 6d. Sunday evening performances in Cranston Picture House, commencing Oct. 14. The programme will consist of *Industrial Britain*, Reiniger's *Carmen*, *In der Nacht*, and *La Maternelle*. Lectures will be given throughout the season.

HULL FILM SOCIETY. Hon Sec., Hannchen M. Drasdo, 81 Beverley Road. Meanwhile this new society will operate on 16mm. and performances will be given in a private studio. The subscription is 15s. for six shows, which will include *Warning Shadows*, *Waxworks*, *Crazy Ray* and some Russian films.

LEICESTER FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., E. Irving Richards, Vaughan College. Subscription, 10s. 6d. A series of twice nightly Saturday performances has again been arranged at Vaughan College. Lectures will be given by Mary Field, Ivor Montagu and others.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD WORKERS' FILM SOCIETY, 86 Hulton Street, Salford, 5. Eight performances will be given in the Rivoli, Rusholme, on Saturdays at 4 p.m. Subscription 10s. First performance, Sept. 22. *Thunder over Mexico*, *Tonende Handschrift*, *Canal Barge*. October 20. *La Maternelle*, *Industrial Britain*.

MANCHESTER JEWISH FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., Freda Platt, 86 Gt. Clowes Street, Salford, 7. In course of formation.

NORTH LONDON FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., H. A. Green, 6 Carysfort Road, Stoke Newington, N.16. A first season of eight monthly performances will be given at the Plaza, Dalston Junction, on Sunday evenings. A well-balanced programme of new Continental films and revivals has been arranged. Subscription, 10s.

NORTHWICH FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., W. Baldwin Fletcher, I.C.I. (Alkali) Ltd., Northwich. By arrangement with Cheshire County Cinemas, Ltd., performances will now be given on Tuesday evenings in the Pavilion. These performances are open to everyone and there is no subscription. Season tickets are available at 10s. 6d., 8s. and 5s. and tickets may be had for single performances at prices from 2s. to 4d. While this scheme has certain limitations, in so far, for instance, as only registered films can be shown, it might be copied with success in towns where it is impossible to arrange private or Sunday performances. There are hundreds of centres throughout the country where this system of working ought to be immediately practicable. First performance, Sept. 25. *Daily Dozen at the Zoo, Industrial Britain, Don Quixote.*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY FILM SOCIETY continues its performances as before at the Electa Cinema. Oct. 21. *Ces Messieurs de la Santé*, Silly Symphony and Mickey Mouse.

OXFORD CITY FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec. Mrs. Hilda Harrison, Flat B, End Street. The second season commences on Oct. 28 with *La Maternelle, Krakotoa,* and *Harlequin.*

SOUTHAMPTON FILM SOCIETY will commence its fourth season in November. All performances are now given on Sunday afternoons. The Society has opened a branch office at Winchester, where nearly 100 members were obtained last season. Hon. Sec. J. S. Fairfax-Jones ; Southampton, D. A. Yeoman, 21 Ethelbert Avenue ; Winchester, Ruth Keyser and C. J. Blackburne, 12 St. Swithun Street.

TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY, c/o Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle. Half-season subscription, 6s. Three performances before Christmas will be held in the Haymarket Theatre on Sunday evenings. A clubroom has been secured for meetings and displays of sub-standard films. First performance, Oct. 14. *Morgenrot, Tonende Handschrift, Don Dougio Farabanca.*

WEST OF SCOTLAND WORKERS FILM SOCIETY. Hon. Sec., James Hough, 16 Balerno Drive, Glasgow, S.W.2. This new Society has been formed " for the advancement of education " in the working classes " by the exhibition of films of an international and cultural character." Twelve Sunday evening performances will be given for a subscription of 10s. First performance, Oct. 7. *Road to Life, Invasion of Shanghai, Paris Markets.* Oct. 21, *Mutter Krausen, Zuyder Zee Dyke,* Disney Cartoon.

CHILDREN'S FILM SOCIETY will give six Saturday morning performances at the Everyman, Hampstead. Programmes will include Westerns, cartoons, animal, documentary and nature films. Stuart Legg, Andrew Buchanan and Mary Field will give talks on how films are made. The subscription is 10s.

NEGOTIATIONS are proceeding for the amalgamation of the Scottish Educational Cinema Society (Education Offices, Bath Street, Glasgow) and the Scottish Educational Sight and Sound Association (17 South Saint Andrew Street, Edinburgh) and it is probable that the new organization will be known as the Scottish Educational Film Association. While both organizations were national in constitution, they were largely regional in influence and the new arrangement will avoid over-lapping and facilitate development. The former has a membership of over 600 while a Lanarkshire branch has over 500 members. Organization of film performances for children is a feature of the Edinburgh organization's work.

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IFMA'S FIRST SUMMER SCHOOL AT WELWYN.

"SELDOM the time, place and loved one, together." The loved one being, as a stage actress once said, that tin prostitute, the film. Digswell Park is a charming place, ideal for the first Summer School. The weather, an important factor, was kind. The rumour that there was a movie-maker, with cine-camera, under every chair is denied. Admitted, there were some queer angles, but none under chairs.

MARY FIELD on "The Instructional Film."

Her knowledge of the subject, her personality and wit enabled Miss Field to give an excellent lecture on that branch of the cinema in which she is expert. She is one of the pioneers of the instructional film and amateurs would do well to follow her example and make films for the class-room. The instructional film can make great use of animated diagrams and maps and here again Miss Field shows the way for the amateur who wants to do something better than filming plays.

JOHN GRIERSON on "Sound."

I think I am justified in saying that John Grierson was our star-turn. Just as, in the early days of cinema, the film was merely a record of what a play-goer might expect to see from the front row of the stalls, so it is with sound to-day. Grierson explained how most directors think only in terms of what we might call unbroken sound, unedited —as were the early visuals. Sound can be cut, dissolved, superimposed, voices can be used for conveying atmosphere instead of dialogue. Rhyming, chanting, blank verse and the subjective word-building of James Joyce are all material for the sound-film. In a short time Grierson had sketched out the possible future of sound in films for the next five or ten years. A strange sea as yet uncharted.

STUART LEGG on "Shooting."

There are many people and places that just won't be filmed and come right, but Stuart Legg can make it if anyone can. He told us how for hours and days he has striven over one shot and then, when in sight of victory, has had it ruined by an unsuspected onlooker. Dealing with the person who always knows how a film should be

made, shooting in confined space without the facilities for high-powered lighting, having too much light in the wrong place and the innumerable difficulties to be overcome in shooting documentary—these were some of the things Legg spoke about. Several 35 mm. cameras were demonstrated and fitted with various lenses and filters, Legg explaining their uses.

BASIL WRIGHT on "Cutting."
A fearsome subject to have to talk about for over an hour, but Basil Wright came through with flags flying. He showed how by different cutting and juxtapositioning of the same shots the content of the whole can be entirely altered. It is not possible to have a shooting script anything like the detailed instructions of a studio production. Documentary needed a different working procedure, Wright explained. He spoke of how the welding of two sequences of different content could be carried out to hold the continuity by cutting on similarity of movement.

PETER LE NEVE FOSTER on "A Movie-maker in Moscow."
By giving the simple unadorned truth about U.S.S.R., le Neve Foster, perhaps unconsciously, debunked the Soviet propaganda of happy ending. Fatalism is still extant in Russia, dreamers have not been replaced by hard-headed technicians and still nobody worries. Foster visited the new Sovkino "Hollywood," of enormous size, with huge revolving stage, immense tank for acquatic scenes, large cutting and dressing rooms, all wired for sound, with everything a director could wish for —but it wasn't finished. He told us of the only training college for film-makers in the world and of his meeting with Pudovkin. This was afterwards illustrated with a 16 mm. film taken at the time.

W. G. FARR, of the British Film Institute, gave a talk upon the purpose, aims and functions of the Institute and showed what demand there is for instructional and documentary films in training centres and schools.

Films were projected every night during the week-end and included the following:

Three classics which were well received: *St. Joan the Maid*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Siegfried* (Pathe, 9.5 mm.).
The King's Visit to Manchester by Peter le Neve Foster. (16 mm.) This is one of the best news-reel items I have seen. Atmosphere of waiting and excitement is definitely created and the shots of vast crowds and attendant incidents make me wish that le Neve Foster had the supervision of some of the news-reels inflicted upon us. Good documentary this. A copy has gone to America for showing.

The Outer Isles by W. L. George (16 mm.). Fine photography of the local industries and occupations carried on in the Hebrides. An interesting documentary with a feeling for atmosphere.
Cable Ship. Legg and Shaw.
The Hunger Marchers by J. W. Harris (16 mm.) An account of the recent march starting from several towns all over Britain and converging on London. But where was the siege of the County Hall? The film was mainly about the part played in the procession by the Cambridge University Socialists. I understand that this film has yet to be edited. Here is a chance to strengthen the idea of the forces converging.
L. Broadbent had three 16 mm. films shown. A comedy, a holiday affair and one of a holiday in the Channel Isles. There were some interesting night scenes in one of these and some good shots of holiday crowds. All three were good. The other 16 mm. film was *Lancashire at Work* by D. F. Taylor, a Travel Association Film. Commentary is in preparation for 35 mm. The reason that Lancashire, the cotton spinning centre, did come to be situated where it is—namely the chemical properties of the rain-water, the use of power in production and the various industries grouped round Lancashire—are all shown in this well-photographed documentary.

G.P.O. FILM PRODUCTIONS.

Cable Ship. Legg and Shaw.
Repairing a damaged under-sea cable—the part played by the cable ship in international communications. A new line in commentaries is taken by giving the workman on the job the task of explaining what he is doing. There is more food for thought in the construction of the sound here than in a dozen sex-dramas.
6.30 Collection. Grierson, Anstey and Watt.
The first 100% *sound* film. The Romance of the Post Office sounds a pretty grisly business but a fantasy has been made out of the rise and fall of correspondence in the 6.30 p.m. West London Postal District simply by using sound. As the postmen return and the keys of the boxes mount higher, tempo increases to a crescendo. With enchanting destinations, snatches of whistling, ring of keys, roar of lorries and clatter of trucks—a glorious racket is orchestrated into a minor symphony of rush, bustle and efficiency.
Pett and Pott. Grierson. Cavalcanti. This is more than comedy; it is gentle satire, not Swift but Thomas Love Peacock. Is the telephone as bringer of domestic bliss, satire on the Post Office? Anyhow, everyone is happy and that is the idea of the film—goodwill. The music is ideal and the way in which the sound is shaped is an inspiration. Nearly all the staff of the Unit appear to be in this jolly affair and it is obvious that they have enjoyed it. The clergyman was good and I predict a future for this un-named actor.

Weather Forecast. Grierson. Evelyn Spice. "We have been asked to broadcast the following gale warning to shipping." What lies behind those words, how the gale was known to be coming, how that knowledge was communicated all round England and finally to the Continent, with shipping warned, is shown in this documentary. The sound was technically good but do winds whistle like that and what were those thumps? Some good photography here.

IFMA (LONDON GROUP).

At the meeting of members it was decided to form a group for the production of educational and documentary films. *Markets* is the provisional title of a documentary dealing with three London food markets, Covent Garden, Smithfield and Billingsgate. Members' language has become much "heartier" of late, since they have taken to snooping round these markets at five and six in the morning. Thomas Baird was appointed director for this first production of the London Group.

Thomas Baird was elected Hon. Secretary of the Association. J. C. H. Dunlop was re-elected Hon. Treasurer and thanked for his past services. Edmund Lightfoot was also re-elected Hon. Asst. Secretary and thanked for his services. Leslie Beisiegel was elected to edit the bulletin, and these pages.

A committee of the above and N. Spurr and E. E. Ward was formed. Many thanks are due to Peter le Neve Foster for his chairmanship of the Summer School.

IFMA BULLETIN.

Besides these pages in *Cinema Quarterly* there is to be issued a Bulletin of information and news of members. This sheet will appear between the four issues of *Cinema Quarterly* at intervals of six to seven weeks; therefore members will have eight bulletins a year. If members want to unburden themselves of some noble idea or have a suggestion to make, or seek a co-operator in a film, please use the Bulletin. Write, in the first place, to Leslie Beisiegel, IFMA, 32 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1.

. . . AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Things being on a firmer footing owing to the meeting and collusion of members determined to storm the citadel of documentary, the future is something to look forward to. If a genius doesn't arise from the ranks of amateurs and astound the film world it won't be IFMA's fault.

AN EXHIBITION OF KINEMATOGRAPHY will be held at the Royal Photographic Society Galleries, 35 Russell Square, London, from Nov. 6 to Nov 30. The exhibition will comprise apparatus, stills and films, and there will be a series of lectures on various aspects of the cinema, illustrated by films. The following meetings will be open to the public. Friday, November 9, 7 p.m., " Experiences of a Cameraman in Ceylon." Basil Wright. Saturday, Nov. 10, 3 p.m. Films entered for the R.P.S. competition. Friday, Nov. 16, 7 p.m. " Sound." S. S. Watkins. " Schufftan." W. D. Woolsey. " Art Direction." E. Carrick. Saturday, Nov. 17, 3 p.m. G.P.O. films. Friday, Nov. 23, 7 p.m. " Films from the Projectionists Point of View," S. T. Perry. Saturday, Nov. 24, 3 p.m. Advertising and Commercial films. Friday, Nov. 30, 7 p.m. " The Educational Film." Mary Field.

G. A. SHAW, who was one of the original members of IFMA, had to resign the position of Hon. Secretary, now held by Thomas Baird, on going abroad. He is now a director with Orient Film Productions and though unable to work for IFMA in an administrative capacity hopes to continue a friendly association, and to give any help he can.

GAUMONT-BRITISH EQUIPMENTS LTD., Film House, Wardour Street, London, W.1., have issued a handsome reference catalogue illustrating the comprehensive range of their products, which includes everything connected with projection and exhibition.

IFMA

If you are interested in documentary, experimental and educational production, write for a prospectus to the Hon. Secretary, THOMAS BAIRD, 32 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1.

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Vol. 3. No. 2. WINTER 1935

made, shooting in confined space without the facilities for high-powered lighting, having too much light in the wrong place and the innumerable difficulties to be overcome in shooting documentary—these were some of the things Legg spoke about. Several 35 mm. cameras were demonstrated and fitted with various lenses and filters, Legg explaining their uses.

BASIL WRIGHT on "Cutting."
A fearsome subject to have to talk about for over an hour, but Basil Wright came through with flags flying. He showed how by different cutting and juxtapositioning of the same shots the content of the whole can be entirely altered. It is not possible to have a shooting script anything like the detailed instructions of a studio production. Documentary needed a different working procedure, Wright explained. He spoke of how the welding of two sequences of different content could be carried out to hold the continuity by cutting on similarity of movement.

PETER LE NEVE FOSTER on "A Movie-maker in Moscow."
By giving the simple unadorned truth about U.S.S.R., le Neve Foster, perhaps unconsciously, debunked the Soviet propaganda of happy ending. Fatalism is still extant in Russia, dreamers have not been replaced by hard-headed technicians and still nobody worries. Foster visited the new Sovkino "Hollywood," of enormous size, with huge revolving stage, immense tank for acquatic scenes, large cutting and dressing rooms, all wired for sound, with everything a director could wish for —but it wasn't finished. He told us of the only training college for film-makers in the world and of his meeting with Pudovkin. This was afterwards illustrated with a 16 mm. film taken at the time.

W. G. FARR, of the British Film Institute, gave a talk upon the purpose, aims and functions of the Institute and showed what demand there is for instructional and documentary films in training centres and schools.

Films were projected every night during the week-end and included the following:

Three classics which were well received: *St. Joan the Maid*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Siegfried* (Pathe, 9.5 mm.).
The King's Visit to Manchester by Peter le Neve Foster. (16 mm.) This is one of the best news-reel items I have seen. Atmosphere of waiting and excitement is definitely created and the shots of vast crowds and attendant incidents make me wish that le Neve Foster had the supervision of some of the news-reels inflicted upon us. Good documentary this. A copy has gone to America for showing.

The Outer Isles by W. L. George (16 mm.). Fine photography of the local industries and occupations carried on in the Hebrides. An interesting documentary with a feeling for atmosphere.
Cable Ship. Legg and Shaw.
The Hunger Marchers by J. W. Harris (16 mm.) An account of the recent march starting from several towns all over Britain and converging on London. But where was the siege of the County Hall? The film was mainly about the part played in the procession by the Cambridge University Socialists. I understand that this film has yet to be edited. Here is a chance to strengthen the idea of the forces converging.
L. Broadbent had three 16 mm. films shown. A comedy, a holiday affair and one of a holiday in the Channel Isles. There were some interesting night scenes in one of these and some good shots of holiday crowds. All three were good. The other 16 mm. film was *Lancashire at Work* by D. F. Taylor, a Travel Association Film. Commentary is in preparation for 35 mm. The reason that Lancashire, the cotton spinning centre, did come to be situated where it is—namely the chemical properties of the rain-water, the use of power in production and the various industries grouped round Lancashire—are all shown in this well-photographed documentary.

G.P.O. FILM PRODUCTIONS.

Cable Ship. Legg and Shaw.
Repairing a damaged under-sea cable—the part played by the cable ship in international communications. A new line in commentaries is taken by giving the workman on the job the task of explaining what he is doing. There is more food for thought in the construction of the sound here than in a dozen sex-dramas.
6.30 Collection. Grierson, Anstey and Watt.
The first 100% *sound* film. The Romance of the Post Office sounds a pretty grisly business but a fantasy has been made out of the rise and fall of correspondence in the 6.30 p.m. West London Postal District simply by using sound. As the postmen return and the keys of the boxes mount higher, tempo increases to a crescendo. With enchanting destinations, snatches of whistling, ring of keys, roar of lorries and clatter of trucks—a glorious racket is orchestrated into a minor symphony of rush, bustle and efficiency.
Pett and Pott. Grierson. Cavalcanti. This is more than comedy; it is gentle satire, not Swift but Thomas Love Peacock. Is the telephone as bringer of domestic bliss, satire on the Post Office? Anyhow, everyone is happy and that is the idea of the film—goodwill. The music is ideal and the way in which the sound is shaped is an inspiration. Nearly all the staff of the Unit appear to be in this jolly affair and it is obvious that they have enjoyed it. The clergyman was good and I predict a future for this un-named actor.

Weather Forecast. Grierson. Evelyn Spice. "We have been asked to broadcast the following gale warning to shipping." What lies behind those words, how the gale was known to be coming, how that knowledge was communicated all round England and finally to the Continent, with shipping warned, is shown in this documentary. The sound was technically good but do winds whistle like that and what were those thumps? Some good photography here.

IFMA (LONDON GROUP).

At the meeting of members it was decided to form a group for the production of educational and documentary films. *Markets* is the provisional title of a documentary dealing with three London food markets, Covent Garden, Smithfield and Billingsgate. Members' language has become much "heartier" of late, since they have taken to snooping round these markets at five and six in the morning. Thomas Baird was appointed director for this first production of the London Group.

Thomas Baird was elected Hon. Secretary of the Association. J. C. H. Dunlop was re-elected Hon. Treasurer and thanked for his past services. Edmund Lightfoot was also re-elected Hon. Asst. Secretary and thanked for his services. Leslie Beisiegel was elected to edit the bulletin, and these pages.

A committee of the above and N. Spurr and E. E. Ward was formed. Many thanks are due to Peter le Neve Foster for his chairmanship of the Summer School.

IFMA BULLETIN.

Besides these pages in *Cinema Quarterly* there is to be issued a Bulletin of information and news of members. This sheet will appear between the four issues of *Cinema Quarterly* at intervals of six to seven weeks; therefore members will have eight bulletins a year. If members want to unburden themselves of some noble idea or have a suggestion to make, or seek a co-operator in a film, please use the Bulletin. Write, in the first place, to Leslie Beisiegel, IFMA, 32 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1.

. . . AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Things being on a firmer footing owing to the meeting and collusion of members determined to storm the citadel of documentary, the future is something to look forward to. If a genius doesn't arise from the ranks of amateurs and astound the film world it won't be IFMA's fault.

AN EXHIBITION OF KINEMATOGRAPHY will be held at the Royal Photographic Society Galleries, 35 Russell Square, London, from Nov. 6 to Nov 30. The exhibition will comprise apparatus, stills and films, and there will be a series of lectures on various aspects of the cinema, illustrated by films. The following meetings will be open to the public. Friday, November 9, 7 p.m., " Experiences of a Cameraman in Ceylon." Basil Wright. Saturday, Nov. 10, 3 p.m. Films entered for the R.P.S. competition. Friday, Nov. 16, 7 p.m. " Sound." S. S. Watkins. " Schufftan." W. D. Woolsey. " Art Direction." E. Carrick. Saturday, Nov. 17, 3 p.m. G.P.O. films. Friday, Nov. 23, 7 p.m. " Films from the Projectionists Point of View," S. T. Perry. Saturday, Nov. 24, 3 p.m. Advertising and Commercial films. Friday, Nov. 30, 7 p.m. " The Educational Film." Mary Field.

G. A. SHAW, who was one of the original members of IFMA, had to resign the position of Hon. Secretary, now held by Thomas Baird, on going abroad. He is now a director with Orient Film Productions and though unable to work for IFMA in an administrative capacity hopes to continue a friendly association, and to give any help he can.

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